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*Comicall Satyre*

*and*

SHAKESPEARE'S

*Troilus and Cressida*

by

Oscar James Campbell

SAN MARINO, CALIFORNIA

1970

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## INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of this volume is to throw new light upon Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*. It seeks to establish a definite relationship between that puzzling drama and the plays of the period that were called "comick satyres." Ben Jonson invented this term and applied it to three of his works: *Every Man Out of His Humor* (1599), *Cynthias Revels* (1600-1601), and *Poetaster* (1601). However, I have felt justified in treating, as though they had borne that label, at least two of Marston's works: *Jack Drum's Entertainment* (1600) and *What You Will* (1601).

The thesis of this book is that these five plays constituted an attempt to prolong an artificially arrested development in the field of English letters of the late sixteenth century. Numerous prose and poetic satires were ordered destroyed, by an edict of the bishops issued on June 1, 1599, and further publication of such works forbidden. Jonson and Marston immediately sought to write plays that would serve as effective substitutes for these banished satires. In *Every Man Out of His Humor* Jonson first revealed systematic principles of construction designed to convert comedy into a vehicle for the spirit and the form of the proscribed literature. In his next two plays he modified and developed his dramatic devices in an effort to improve the theatrical qualities of the new sort of play. Marston attempted, in his first satiric comedies, to apply the same principles in his own way. And Shakespeare in *Troilus and Cressida* made his one thorough experiment with the type.

Modern critics are prone to use the word "satire" to designate any work of literature which harbors a considerable spirit of derision. They so describe incidental ridicule of folly or censure of wickedness, no less than works entirely devoted to planned and sustained mockery and castigation. That is, they seldom restrict the term to the traditional literary forms in which the impulse to ridicule has become incarnate. On the other hand, when literary historians use the word in their analyses and descriptions of this small group of plays, they tend to restrict its meaning to personal lampoon. Much confusion in literary criticism has resulted in using the term, sometimes too loosely and sometimes too narrowly.

In this work satire always refers to a well-defined literary form.

The study is, of course, particularly concerned with a kind of dramatic satire. The latter term will be used, throughout the book, to describe something much more specific than a play invaded by a spirit of sarcasm, irony, or ridicule, or even than one permeated by it. Of course, no author can compose any sort of satire unless he is moved by an impulse to mock or to reform. But a "satire" or "satyr," in the critical terminology of the Renaissance, implied a distinctive artistic method and a well-defined literary type devoted to the denunciation, exposure, or derision of some kind of folly and abuse. Hence, when a learned man like Jonson essayed to write satiric comedy or, as he felicitously named it, "comickall satyre," he naturally tried to make his work harmonize with the most authoritative rules he knew for the writing of both comedy and satire and with the methods followed by the most respected authors of formal satire in antiquity and in Italy and England of the sixteenth century. Many of the unusual features of his three comickall satires can thus best be understood as his endeavors to transfer, from formal satire into a suitable sort of comedy, the artistic procedure and even the stock devices which both critical doctrine and customary practice had made the distinguishing features of the earlier satiric forms. The same statement holds true for Marston's early comedies.

To establish our thesis we shall first review Jonson's efforts to render his three comickall satires effective theatrical entertainment and yet to retain for them the salutary social functions which all satire should exercise. Then we shall trace Marston's similar efforts up to the time that Shakespeare apparently began to write *Troilus and Cressida*. This survey, it is hoped, will explain some confusing aspects of these important works and clarify an important phase of their authors' intellectual development. But its principal service will be to make manifest the conventions, established by these two innovators, which Shakespeare successfully adapted to his purpose when constructing *Troilus and Cressida*.

The writing of satiric plays did not cease with the appearance of Shakespeare's play, nor with the closing of the theatres during Queen Elizabeth's fatal illness in 1603. But when the playhouses opened again in 1604, they reflected a different social and political world. Partly for that reason, partly because of the appearance of new literary influences during the intervening year, and partly because of the growing skill of practitioners of the new art of satiric

comedy, the plays of the same general nature written after 1603 differ in important respects from those treated in this volume. The present study should elucidate certain features of *Sejanus*, *Coriolanus*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Malcontent*, and *Volpone*—to mention but five characteristic plays of the early years of James I's reign. However, it has seemed wise to postpone the consideration of these dramas until a later volume.

The point of view developed here has not been taken by previous critics and historians of this area of Elizabethan drama. Yet I am under great obligation to the researches of previous scholars. The late C. R. Baskervill's book, *English Elements in Jonson's Early Comedy*, has been of the most immediate service. His thorough treatment of Jonson's indebtedness to earlier English literature has formed a foundation upon which I have built with a strong sense of security. C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson's edition of Jonson's works and E. K. Chambers' *The Elizabethan Stage* have been constantly at my elbow as I have carried on my studies. Recognition of the aid I have received from the multitude of scholars in the field must be reserved for the notes on particular points at issue.

The study of which this volume is the first substantial result has been carried on at the Huntington Library, where I have been on three occasions a visiting scholar. A considerable part of the chapter on *Poetaster* has already appeared in the *Huntington Library Bulletin*, No. 9, under the title, "The Dramatic Construction of *Poetaster*." To the Director and the Trustees of that institution I wish to express my profound gratitude for the opportunities for extended research which they have afforded me. To Professor Lily B. Campbell, and to my colleagues at the Library, Godfrey Davies and Louis B. Wright, I owe many suggestions which have materially improved the original plan and the form of this volume. The patient and careful scrutiny of my manuscript by M. H. Crissey, of the Library staff, has saved me from numerous inaccuracies, inconsistencies, and infelicities of expression. The generous expenditure of time and thought on the part of these friends upon my work has constituted one of the major satisfactions that have come to me during its composition.

OSCAR JAMES CAMPBELL.

*Columbia University*  
*March, 1938*





# CHAPTER I

## Theories of Dramatic Satire

### I

On June 1, 1599, the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London launched their famous restraining order against the satirists.<sup>1</sup> They prohibited the further printing of works of Hall, Marston, and Davies in particular, and "all NASSHES bookes and Doctor HARVY's bookes," and ordered that all copies that could be found be "broughte to the Bishop of LONDON to be burnte." They further decreed that "noe *Satyres* or *Epigrams* be printed hereafter." Under the entry of June 4 of the same year a list of the books "burnte in the hall" is given.<sup>2</sup> Despite the apparent effectiveness of these radical measures, the satiric spirit that had been so vigorous during the preceding decade could not be destroyed by decree. Almost immediately authors associated with the proscribed movement devised a form of comedy which effectively preserved its salutary purposes and its methods.

Ben Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humor* was apparently the first play consciously dedicated to that purpose. It was composed soon after the restraining order of the bishops—probably during the second half of the year 1599. Its descriptive title, "The Comickall Satyre," suggests that it represents the author's conscious effort "to exhibit the new modes of satirical expression in the heightened context of dramatic dialogue and scenery." Such a theory of the origin of *Every Man Out of His Humor* helps to explain some of its unusual features.

Critics have often missed the significant innovations which this comedy introduced to the Elizabethan stage, because of their tendency to consider Jonson's so-called "humour" plays as a pair and to regard them in themselves as a definite type of comedy. Readers who thus look upon *Every Man Out* merely as a companion piece to *Every Man in* naturally find it of an unaccountably inferior

<sup>1</sup>For its text see *A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London*, ed. Edward Arber (1876), III, 316.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 316 b.

<sup>3</sup>*Ben Jonson*, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson (Oxford), I (1925), 398.

quality.<sup>4</sup> But the conventional view of the two dramas is unsound. The term "humour" is applicable only to a method of character analysis and portrayal and not to a form of dramatic construction. *Every Man in His Humor*, as will presently appear, embodies none of the distinguishing marks of formal satire, while Jonson's second "humour" comedy presents dramatic equivalents of almost all of its characteristics.

In successive years Jonson followed his experiment by two further efforts to realize the possibilities of his newly invented form: *Cynthias Revels* in 1600, and *Poetaster* in 1601. In the meantime Marston, in *The First Part of Antonio and Mellida*, had made an apparently independent attempt to transfer his satiric activities to the stage. He continues this program in his later comedies, taking occasional suggestions from the works of the more experienced and versatile Jonson. The success of these two writers in giving expression, in the new sort of dramatic entertainment, to both the critical spirit of the movement and the interests of theatre audiences, led other writers to imitate the innovation. Shakespeare, Chapman, and, to a less degree, Dekker and Middleton, consolidated and occasionally extended the gains of the new "comickall satyre."

Contemporary critics of the satiric movement at once realized that it had captured the stage. They had recognized the accepted forms of this hostile critical spirit to be "satire" and "epigram." Now that these forms of literary expression had been prohibited, their place had been taken by the "humour" play. For example, the anonymous author of *The Whipping of the Satyre*, a book entered in the *Stationers' Registers* on August 14, 1601, dedicates his work to the "vayne-glorious, the Satyryst, Epigrammatist, and Humorist." In a section of his poem entitled "In Epigrammatistam & Humoristam," he clearly reveals that to him a "humourist" is an author of dramatic satire.

It seemes your brother *Satyre* and ye twayne,  
Plotted three wayes to put the Divell downe;  
One should outrayle him by invective vaine,  
One all to flout him like a countrey clowne;

<sup>4</sup>Herford and Simpson do not make this mistake. They say (*ibid.*, p. 375): "It is a second handling of the same theme, with a more direct satiric purpose and a more uncompromising and defiant originality of method."

And one in action, on a stage out-face,  
And play upon him to his great disgrace.\*

In *No Whippinge, nor trippinge: but a kinde friendly Snippinge* (1601), an answer (sometimes attributed to Breton) to *The Whipping of the Satyre*, the same recognition is given to the satiric pretensions of the new comic mode:

Tis strange to see the humors of these daies:  
How first the Satyre bites at imperfections:  
The Epigrammatist in his quips displaies  
A wicked course in shadowes of corrections:  
The Humorist hee strictly makes collections  
Of loth'd behaviours both in youthe and age:  
And makes them plaie their parts upon a stage.†

The third, or dramatic, channel of the satiric spirit, established in order to circumvent a legal prohibition, soon became its exclusive one. After 1599 formal satire practically ceased to be written until 1613. In that year the publication of George Wither's *Abuses Stript, and Whipt. Or Satirical Essayes* gave a new lease of life to the older form, which continued to flourish until 1625. The present volume will give an account of only the first development of satiric drama, from the appearance of *Every Man Out of His Humor* to the suspension of plays on March 19, 1603, during the Queen's illness that terminated in her death on March 24. A very serious onslaught of the plague then intervened, so that not until after Lent of 1604 were professional companies authorized to resume their performances.

## II

In the induction to *Every Man Out* Jonson devotes part of the colloquy of his three commentators to justifying the new form which his comedy is to assume. He assures his audience that, though his drama is an innovation, it accords with orthodox critical theory and with the approved practice of the art of comedy. In one piece of dialogue, between Mitis and Cordatus, Jonson explains the precise relationship of the play to classical forms of comedy as they had been defined by the authoritative critics of the Renaissance.

\*Sig. F3v (quoted R. M. Alden, *The Rise of Formal Satire in England under Classical Influence* ["Publications of the University of Pennsylvania, Series in Philology, Literature and Archaeology," VII, No. 2; Philadelphia, 1899], p. 163).

†Sig. A4 (quoted Alden, *op. cit.*, p. 164).

*Mit.* You have seene his play *Cordatus*? pray you; how is't?

*Cord.* Faith sir, I must refraine to judge, onely this I can say of it, 'tis strange, and of a perticular kind by it selfe, somewhat like *Vetus Comoedia*: a worke that hath bounteously pleased me, how it will answere the generall expectation, I know not.

*Mit.* Does he observe all the lawes of Comedie in it?

*Cord.* What lawes meane you?

*Mit.* Why the equall deviation of it into Acts and Scenes, according to the Terentian manner, his true number of Actors; the furnishing of the Scene with *Grege* or *Chorus*, and that the whole Argument fall within compasse of a daies efficiencie.

*Cord.* O no, these are too nice observations.'

This familiar passage has been quoted at length because, when properly understood, it throws light upon theories which Jonson applied to the composition of his three comical satires. The meaning is clear. *Every Man Out of His Humor* is a kind of *vetus comoedia*—a term which the critics of the Renaissance applied to the Greek comedy which culminated in the work of Aristophanes, and to nothing else. Therefore, when, a moment later, Mitis asks if Jonson's new work observes all the rules of comedy, he means, as he expressly says, comedy as Terence wrote it—not *vetus comoedia*.<sup>1</sup> To assert, with Baskervill and Herford and Simpson, that Jonson in the above passage intends the phrase to refer to all classical comedy,<sup>2</sup> is to convict him of misusing a familiar part of an established critical vocabulary in a way to confuse every well-informed person among his readers.

<sup>1</sup>*The Comickall Satyre of Every Man Out of His Humor. As It Was First Composed by the Author B. I. Containing more than hath been Publickely Spoken or Acted. With the severall Character of every Person* (London: Printed for William Holme, 1600), sig. B4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>2</sup>In the quarto version the phrase "the furnishing of the Scene with *Grege* or *Chorus*" does not appear. And these are the words which seem to have led the critics astray.

<sup>3</sup>Herford and Simpson (*Jonson*, I, 376 and n.) assert that "*Vetus Comoedia* in this passage necessarily means Greek and Roman Comedy," and that, if "he [Jonson] claims that it is 'like *Vetus Comoedia*,' the likeness lies in its vigorous independence of tradition." C. R. Baskervill (*English Elements in Jonson's Early Comedy* [*Bulletin of the University of Texas*, "Studies in English," No. 1; Austin, 1911], p. 212) writes: "The phrase *Vetus Comoedia* would naturally be interpreted at once as referring to classic comedy, and the context seems to support this interpretation." Chapman's conception of *vetus comoedia* is clearly not the one which I have defined. In a passage in his "Prologus" to *All Fools*, written probably in 1604, he expresses emphatic disapproval of the way in which the personal invective of the poetomachia had contaminated "old comedy." The important lines are the following:

"Who can shew cause why th'ancient comick vaine  
Of *Eupolis* and *Cratinus* (now reviv'd,

Cordatus proceeds to trace the history of ancient comedy, pointing out first "that that which wee call *Comoedia*, was at first nothing but a simple and continued Satyre, sung by one only person." Next, passing on to the enumeration of the writers of early Greek comedy conventional in all the Renaissance critics, he says, "Every man in the dignitie of his spirit and judgement" supplied something,

and (though that in him this kind of Poeme appeared absolute, and fully perfected) yet how is the face of it chang'd since, in *Menander*, *Philemon*, *Cecilius*, *Plautus*, and the rest; . . . I see not then but we should enjoy the same *Licentia* or free power, to illustrate and heighten our invention as they did; and not be tied to those strict and regular forms, which the nicenesse of a few (who are nothing but *Forme*) would thrust upon us.<sup>10</sup>

Jonson, in thus reviewing precedents, seeks a justification of his desire for the same freedom in carrying out his plans for comical satire, as that enjoyed by the authors of "old comedy." And his program was the creation of a sixteenth-century equivalent of Greek *vetus comoedia*.

Jonson's conception of this form of comedy, adumbrated in the dialogue of Mitis and Cordatus, can be more accurately understood by examining the critical works from which he is most likely to have derived his critical terminology. Chief among these was the *Poetices* of J. C. Scaliger, Jonson's own copy of which is now in the Library of the University of Chicago. In all that Scaliger says about *vetus comoedia* he makes it clear that the term applies to only one sort of Greek comedy, the distinguishing characteristic of which was its vigorous, abusive satire. He writes:

Three periods of comedy are recognized. The first of these was that of old comedy—a time of completely democratic rule [*Itaque tres Comoediae narrantur aetates, uno vetus, . . .*]. Therefore in that age a poet was permitted to raise a laugh by any sort of jest. He

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Subject to personall application)

Should be exploded by some bitter splenes."

(Ll. 13-16 [George Chapman, *All Fools* and *The Gentleman Usher*, ed. T. M. Parrott (Boston and London, 1907), p. 31.]

The prominence given to Eupolis and Cratinus in Renaissance accounts of "old comedy" is a reflection of a familiar passage of Horacé (quoted below, n. 13), in which he designates these two writers, along with Aristophanes, as the principal authors of "*comoedia prisca*."

<sup>10</sup>Sigs. B4<sup>v</sup>-C.

could abuse individuals with impunity, on the ground that a deterrent fear of a bad reputation would reconcile men's minds to virtue and restore them to socially beneficent living [*appellerent ad frugem bonam*].<sup>11</sup>

In another important passage Scaliger defends Juvenal against the accusation of having perverted the nature of satire by invading it with his bold, harsh spirit. The detractors of the great Latin poet, he thinks, based their arguments on the false assumption that satire is a late development of the satyr-play. The latter, they believed, was a merry form of folk drama which did not censure directly, but derided and scoffed through pantomimic action. But Scaliger asserts that satire should look, for its philosophy and method, not to satyr-plays but to *vetus comoedia*, because the laws of Roman satire were fixed by the spirit and procedure of the early Greek drama.<sup>12</sup>

This view of the close connection between *vetus comoedia* and Latin satire, widely held during the Renaissance, is derived from a passage in Horace,<sup>13</sup> in which he emphasizes the freedom allowed to the early Greek writers of comedy in expressing their disapproval of all sorts of rogues. From the work of these men Lucilius, the originator of Latin satire, obtained license for one important feature of his work—its aggressive, censorious wit.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup>This translation, like all others from the *Poetics* which appear in this chapter, is based on that of F. M. Padelford's *Select Translations from Scaliger's Poetics* ("Yale Studies in English," XXVI; New York, 1905)—in this instance, p. 42. But it has been slightly altered, here and there, in the interest of what has seemed a more literal accuracy. The Latin passage appears in *Julii Caesaris Scaligeri, . . . Poetices libri septem* (Lyons, 1561), p. 12.

<sup>12</sup>The Latin passage of which this is a summary reads as follows: "Quam lenem, ac placidè fluentem videas in Horatio, in Juvenali asperam, ac temerariam. Non enim reprehensorem, aut objurgatorem esse Satyrum, sed subsannatorem, & irrisorem. haud ita est, quemadmodum suo loco diximus. Videmus enim hîc, veterum & usum & judicium quod ex veteri comoedia in Latinis Satyris pro lege habendum est. tales enim fuere & Eupolis & Cratinus. Aristophani verò propior Horatius."

<sup>13</sup>"Eupolis atque Cratinus Aristophanesque poetae atque alii, quorum comoedia prisca virorum est, si quis erat dignus describi, quod malus ac fur, quod moechus foret aut sicarius aut alioqui famosus, multa cum libertate notabant. hinc omnis pendet Lucilius, hosce secutus."

(*Satires* I. iv. 1-6.)

<sup>14</sup>Cf. G. L. Hendrickson, "Horace, Serm. I 4: A Protest and a Programme," *American Journal of Philology*, XXI, 125.

In the same poem Horace points out another important similarity between comedy and satire. They both employ the language and the tone of familiar conversation. Indeed, his own verses are nearer those of old comedy than those of Lucilius, because they are *sermoni propriori*—more like conversation. A further important resemblance Horace did not mention. The talks which constitute his *Sermones*, as Professor Fairclough has pointed out, “are on the incidents and aspects of everyday life.”<sup>13</sup> Satire thus naturally approaches close to comedy in its subject matter and its relaxed aesthetic tone.

Jonson’s belief in this widely accepted literary relationship between old comedy and Latin satire would convince him that, in seeking to establish a new dramatic form for satire, he was reasserting a relationship established when Lucilius and his Roman successors began to write and was re-establishing a type of comedy the aims and methods of which had once been accurately defined.<sup>14</sup>

Yet Jonson, in a passage in *Timber*, makes it clear that he disapproves of at least one aspect of old comedy:

Nor is the moving of laughter always the end of comedy; that is rather a fowling for the people’s delight, or their fooling. For, as Aristotle says rightly, the moving of laughter is a fault in comedy, a kind of turpitude that depraves some sort of a man’s nature without a disease. As a wry face without pain moves laughter, or a deformed vizard, . . . we dislike and scorn such representations. . . . So that what either in the words or sense of an author, or in the language or actions of men, is awry or depraved doth strangely stir mean affections, and provoke for the most part to laughter. And therefore it was clear that all insolent and obscene speeches, jests upon the best men, injuries to particular persons, perverse and sinister sayings and the rather unexpected in the old comedy did move laughter, especially where it did imitate any dishonesty; and scurrility came forth in the place of wit.<sup>15</sup>

This critical pronouncement was made late in Jonson’s life, long after he designed his comical satires. It may well express a different opinion from that which he held in 1599. However, in the plays we are to discuss Jonson shows his aversion to unrestrained personal

<sup>13</sup>H. Rushton Fairclough, “Horace’s View of the Relations between Satire and Comedy,” *ibid.*, XXXIV, 187.

<sup>14</sup>The views of the Italian critics of the sixteenth century differed on these matters in no important respect from Scaliger.

<sup>15</sup>*Timber: or, Discoveries Made upon Men and Matter*, ed. Felix E. Schelling (Boston, 1892), pp. 81-82.



ridicule and to downright buffoonery. Therefore his dramas, though devised as new forms of old Greek comedy, may be expected to deviate from their model in this one important respect. But, in the main, Jonson took care to have Cordatus employ the term *vetus comoedia* in the exact meaning which it had acquired in the critical vocabulary of the Renaissance. The author's accurate use of the phrase at an important point of the induction to *Every Man Out of His Humor* was his economical way of preparing the intelligent persons in his audience for the sort of comedy they were about to see. If they had any idea of *vetus comoedia* they would know virtually what to expect. From the first scene on, they would watch for the reappearance of the sort of ridicule that formed the essence of old comedy. They would also be prepared to appreciate Jonson's method of embarking fools and knaves upon dramatic careers that would lead them to absurd and disastrous ends. Nevertheless, they would expect him to avoid lampoon and such farce as aroused merely thoughtless laughter, and would accept without question his exhibition of a temper as harsh and severe as that of Juvenal himself. In none of these respects were they to be disappointed. All of the distinguishing characteristics of *vetus comoedia* do appear in *Every Man Out of His Humor*, in new but clearly recognizable forms. The term, properly interpreted, may be said to reveal Jonson's program for the creation of dramatic satire to meet a persistent social and intellectual interest of his age.

### III

Comedy written solely for satiric purposes merely placed exclusive emphasis upon what the Renaissance regarded as one of the essential functions of this dramatic form. Jonson clearly derived his ideas of comedy from the works of Renaissance adherents to the Aristotelian tradition in dramatic theory. He seems to have known best the critical theories of Scaliger, Pontanus, Heinsius, and Vossius. Only a little less intimate was his acquaintance with the early Italian commentators on Aristotle, like Robortelli and Vettori, and the creators of complete critical systems, like Minturno." Jonson appears also

<sup>11</sup>Cf. *Critical Essays of the Seventeenth Century*, ed. J. E. Spingarn (Oxford), I (1908), xvi-xviii. This author opines that Jonson's "knowledge of critical developments on the continent was limited by his small French and less Italian." Jonson's comparative ignorance of Italian is inferred from Drummond's ill-natured and suspicious report, and

to have been familiar with Plato's ideas of comedy, particularly as they found expression in the *Philebus* and the *Laws*. By the beginning of the seventeenth century these concepts, too, had worked their way into the main current of Renaissance criticism.

The principal tenets of the Aristotelian doctrine concerning comedy, which were accepted everywhere when Jonson wrote *Every Man Out of His Humor*, are thoroughly familiar. Comedy, though universally regarded as a form of art inferior to tragedy, had a no less definite and important aim. It presented examples of vice, but only of those minor forms of it which manifested themselves in the slightly base and ugly conduct of humble and unknown persons. Its object was to render such actions ridiculous and thus to expose folly and to eradicate vice.

Aristotle may have also held a theory of comic catharsis analogous to that of tragic catharsis. Lane Cooper<sup>2</sup> argues with learning and plausibility that, as Aristotle believed that pity and fear are relieved by tragedy, so he apparently regarded anger and envy as the particular emotions most effectively purged through comedy. He suggests, too, that "Aristotle would, under different circumstances, recognize different effects of comedy; that in one connection he would note a catharsis of troublesome emotions like anger and envy, and in another a catharsis of laughter itself."<sup>3</sup> Or putting it in another way, "By comedy . . . we should be cured of a desire to laugh at the wrong time, and at the wrong things, through being made to laugh at the proper time by the right means."<sup>4</sup> Minturno, among the Italian critics of the sixteenth century, relying on this Aristotelian tradition, rebukes those who consider comedy a trivial form of art

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need not be taken very seriously, as I have argued elsewhere ("The Relation of *Epicoene* to Aretino's *Il Marescalco*," *PMLA*, XLVI, 762 n.). Spingarn exempts the Dutch writers whom I have mentioned in the text. Their studies were founded on those of the Italians I have enumerated, so that the theories of Minturno, for example, could have come to Jonson indirectly, if the strange assumption be made that he could not read him in the original Italian.

<sup>2</sup>*An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, with an Adaptation of the Poetics and a Translation of the 'Tractatus Coislinianus'* (New York, 1922), pp. 66-69. To this learned work I am greatly indebted for much that I write on the subject of the Aristotelian tradition.

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid.* In the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, laughter in comedy is elevated to a position equivalent to fear in tragedy. "As in tragedies there should be a due proportion of fear, so in comedies there should be a due proportion of laughter." (*Ibid.*, p. 226.)

because it provokes laughter. He asserts that, through laughter at the follies of others, one avoids being a buffoon oneself.

Plato's ideas of comedy are harmonious with these of Aristotle and his disciples. Plato advances, more than once, the notion that ridicule should be directed only against vice and folly.<sup>2</sup> In the *Laws* he makes clear the essential moral service which that sort of ridicule renders:

It is necessary also to consider and know uncomely persons and thoughts, and those which are intended to produce laughter in comedy, and have a comic character both in respect to style, and song, and dance, or any other mode of imitation. For serious things cannot be understood without laughable things, nor opposites at all without opposites, if a man is really to have intelligence of either; but he cannot carry out both in action, if he is to have ever so small a share of virtue. And for this very reason he should learn them both, in order that he may not in ignorance do or say anything which is ridiculous and out of place—he should command slaves and hired strangers to imitate such things, and should never take any serious interest in them himself, . . . Let these then be laid down, both in law and in our narrative, as the regulations of laughable amusements which are generally called comedy.<sup>3</sup>

Plato's thesis, as expressed in the above passage, is that a man knows what qualities he should attain, partly by knowing what qualities he should avoid. The purpose of comedy is to make the individual averse to follies by enabling him to see them as ridiculous. This idea, or others similar to it, became a commonplace of Renaissance criticism. Minturno answers, in the negative, the query of his interlocutor, Angelo Costanzo, whether the appearance of such figures as the old man in love do not set bad examples. On the contrary, Minturno argues that impersonation of the folly enables the writer of comedy to make such senile love ridiculous and all men eager to avoid it.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Cf., e.g., *Republic* v. 452 (*The Dialogues of Plato*, tr. B. Jowett [Oxford, 1871], II, 282).

<sup>3</sup>*Laws* vii. 816 (*Dialogues*, IV, 330). This theory, we shall see, is illustrated with formal precision in the construction of Ben Jonson's *Poetaster*.

<sup>4</sup>"Anzi il Comico in tale innamoramento dimostrando, quanto del vecchio innamorato ci ridiamo, insegna quanto questo vizio sia da fuggire. E, se ciò non fusse contro al dicevole, niuno sene riderebbe. Percioche tal riso nasce dalla meraviglia, la qual habbiamo di quella bruttezza, che al vecchio si disdice. . . . Ma chi non sà il fine della poesia esser la meraviglia; nella Comica, quella, che apporta riso, ò festa; e nella Tragica, quella, che induce compassione, ò spavento?" (*L'Arte poetica del Sig. Antonio Minturno, nella quale si contengono i precetti heroici, tragici, comici, satyrici, e d'ogni altra poesia* [Venice, 1564], p. 120.)

In the *Philebus* Plato defines more clearly the essence of the ridiculous. It is, he believes, always caused by ignorance of self.<sup>26</sup> But he adds that such ignorance in the powerful is horrible, and that it is ridiculous only in those lower social orders where it cannot injure others. Cicero, in *De oratore*, presents the more usual view when he says that matter for ridicule is restricted to the defects of men who are not held in universal esteem, or seriously afflicted with adversity, or deserving of punishment for their faults.<sup>27</sup> The critics all rigorously limited the scope of both the field and the temper of the comic. Abuse was excluded from it because, as Plato insists,<sup>28</sup> it is the product of a moment's anger, and no ridicule inspired by serious vexation is properly comic. Plato particularly condemns "the feminine habit of casting aspersions on one another."

The subjects proper to writers of comedy were set forth in the same way. Aristotle believed that they should confine their dramatic efforts to presenting the "ugly" in human life—the word describing not only the physically deformed but also the morally disproportionate. He thus bids comedy direct laughter against the frailties and follies of mankind and not against its vices. This distinction enables him to draw a sharp line between comedy and personal lampoon.<sup>29</sup> The appearance of direct personal satire can be avoided, as was done by the writers of Greek middle comedy, by presenting generalized types of character in place of recognizable individuals, or, as he suggests in the *Nicomachean ethics*, by employing, not abuse, but innuendo<sup>30</sup>—that is, depreciatory suggestion which avoids producing pain in the objects of its fun.<sup>30</sup> Emphasis—meaning exaggeration—was

<sup>26</sup>*Philebus* 48 (*Dialogues*, III, 199).

<sup>27</sup>"Quamobrem materies omnis ridiculorum est in istis vitijis quae sunt in vitia hominem neque charorum, neque calamitosorum, neque eorum qui ob facinus ad supplicium rapiendi videntur: eaque belle agitata ridetur." (*Marci Tullii Ciceronis de oratore libri tres* [Kyngestonus, 1573], pp. 189-90.)

<sup>28</sup>*Laws* xi. 935 (*Dialogues*, IV, 447). "He who is engaged in the practice of reviling cannot revile without attempting to say what is ludicrous; and this is the use of ridicule, employed in a moment of anger, which we censure."

<sup>29</sup>*Poetics* v. 1 (S. H. Butcher, *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Arts, with a Critical Text and a Translation of The Poetics* [London, 1895], p. 19).

<sup>30</sup>*The Works of Aristotle*, tr. into English under editorship of W. D. Ross, IX [Oxford, 1925]: *Ethica Nicomachea* iv. 8 (§1128<sup>a</sup>).

<sup>30</sup>The same sharp differentiation of comedy from lampoon is made in the *Tractatus Coislinianus*: "Comedy differs from abuse, since abuse openly censures the bad qualities attaching [to men], whereas comedy requires the so-called emphasis [? or 'innuendo']" (Cooper, *op. cit.*, p. 225.)

also regarded, at least by the followers of Aristotle,<sup>31</sup> as a permitted substitute for invective.<sup>32</sup> That and its cousin scurrility (the stock in trade of a buffoon) were the qualities which a writer of comedy was most earnestly urged to avoid.

Without exception, the English critics of the sixteenth century repeat these ideas. New comedy, which they invariably regarded as the fountainhead of all Renaissance comedy, was distinguished from old comedy by its substitution of good-natured correction of faults common to large numbers of men, for rough, impudent attacks on individuals.<sup>33</sup> Hence writers of comedy employed ridicule as a method of dissuasion from vice and of encouragement to virtue.<sup>34</sup> This ethical result they obtained through the creation of fictitious characters who display the symptoms of various sorts of folly in so realistic a fashion that each aberration can be immediately identified. The same characters then act in such a way as to dramatize the unfortunate results of addiction to these various follies. Comedy thereby fulfilled Horace's injunction to join profit to delight,<sup>35</sup> in order that it might, in equal measure, please and counsel the reader.

Now and then, these English critics describe the methods and objects of comedy in terms that could be applied to satire with equal propriety. Sidney, for example, says that comedy must represent the common errors of our life "in the most ridiculous & scornfull sort that may be."<sup>36</sup> Yet elsewhere in the same work he describes as scornful that feeling which is inharmonious with the delight which authentic comedy should evoke. Certain forms of laughter, he asserts, bring none of this delight. "In twenty mad Anticks," he

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup>Cooper (*ibid.*, p. 203) infers, from this idea and certain related opinions expressed in the *Poetics*, that Aristotle would approve of caricature.

<sup>33</sup>Cf., e.g., George Puttenham's *The Arte of English Poesie* (London: R. Field, 1589), sig. Fv, and William Webbe, *A Discourse of English Poetrie* (London: R. Walley, 1586), sig. C2<sup>r</sup> & v.

<sup>34</sup>Cf. Sir Philip Sidney, *An Apologie for Poetrie* (London: H. Olney, 1595), sig. F3<sup>r</sup> & v, for a typical expression of this idea.

<sup>35</sup>The following four lines are the source of this doctrine:

"Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae  
aut simul et jucunda et idonea dicere vitae.

. . . . .  
omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci,  
lectorem delectando pariterque monendo."

(Horace, *De arte poetica* 333-34, 343-44.)

<sup>36</sup>*Op. cit.*, sig. F3.

writes, "we laugh without delight." But "*Hercules*, painted with his great beard, and furious countenance, in a womans attire, spinning at *Omphales* commaundement, . . . breedeth both delight and laughter. For the representing of so strange a power in love, procureth delight; and the scornefulnes of the action, stirreth laughter."<sup>97</sup> By "delight," in these passages, Sidney means "delightful teaching." Even farce, if it shows the follies into which love can lead a man, is justifiable comedy; mere clownishness, however, is not, because the laughter it provokes leaves the mind vacant. Therefore, where no social correction is administered, no real comedy exists. Since that idea was firmly fixed in the minds of all men of the Renaissance who were familiar with the Aristotelian tradition, we should not be surprised to find Lodge lamenting that his age has produced no satirical poets to pen its comedies: "If we had some Satericall Poetes nowe a dayes to penn our commedies, that might be admitted of zeale, to discypher the abuses of the worlde in the person of notorious offenders."<sup>98</sup> In Lodge's mind comedy and satire are once more united as they were in the days of old comedy.

Ben Jonson in his critical writings makes clear that he accepted all of these ideas. He asserted that the purpose of comedy was to reform the vicious and to expose the foolish, by rendering the ugly conduct of humble persons ridiculous. He held that to see a folly impersonated in a dramatic figure does not set a bad example to follow, but presents an instance of absurdity to be avoided. He, too, believed that personal abuse and lampoon of all sorts were as much out of place in comedy as were scurrility and invective directed against persons of social and political importance. To him the very essence of new comedy was that it substituted derided general types for impudently attacked recognizable individuals. Hence farce, if it taught delightfully, was a proper instrument of comedy, but mere buffoonery and the vacant mirth which it provoked never were. The derision of Socrates in *The Clouds*, Jonson regards as an example of false comic method. "This," he says, "is truly leaping from the stage to the tumbril again, reducing all wit to the original dung-cart."<sup>99</sup> Jonson's objection to *The Clouds* was not primarily that it aroused scorn. Even that attitude, if enlisted in the service of instruction,

<sup>97</sup>*Ibid.*, sigs. K2v-K3, *passim*.

<sup>98</sup>Thomas Lodge, [*Reply to Stephen Gosson's Schoole of Abuse*] (1580?), sig. C4 a.

<sup>99</sup>*Timber*, ed. Schelling, pp. 81-82, *passim*.

might be appropriate for comedy. His disapproval was reserved for the absence of any intellectual residue in the laughter directed against Socrates.

The foregoing review of the various conceptions of comedy and satire current in the critical works of the Renaissance would be justified as an introduction to the study of few dramatists of Elizabethan England. But it is necessary for a complete comprehension of Jonson's new project. Unless he had felt supported by the weight of critical tradition and authority, he would scarcely have been emboldened to create what was for his day a dramatic innovation. His comical satires are most clearly understood when regarded as a hitherto uncontrived synthesis of the practice of the ancients in old comedy and the theories of the Renaissance based on classical precept and example. Without a fresh knowledge of this aggregate of learning, we should find it difficult to determine what characteristics of his new form Jonson considered essential. But his comical satire, besides observing all the critical proprieties, was designed to preserve the genius of formal satire and all the important features of the salutary ridicule of vice and folly, which the restraining order of the bishops had brought to an abrupt close. Therefore, we must now examine with some care the brief but exciting career of English poetic satire during the 1590's.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>40</sup>It has not seemed necessary to establish by voluminous quotation Jonson's well-known acceptance of the Aristotelian tradition, particularly as it relates to comedy. His views appear in the prologues and dedications to his plays, notably in the dedicatory epistle to *Volpone* (1607); in the inductions to his comedies, especially *Every Man Out of His Humor*; in the action and speech of his dramatis personae, conspicuously in *Poetaster*; and, of course, in certain sections of *Timber*.

## CHAPTER II

### The Prevailing Forms of English

Satire, 1588-1599

#### *I. The Social and Economic Background*

*Vetus comoedia*, as understood by the learned critics of the Renaissance, was Jonson's remote model for the new sort of comedy that he began to write in 1599. Its antiquity and the relation it was supposed to bear to Latin satire gave comfort and assurance to Jonson, the classicist and humanist, as he embarked upon his fresh dramatic enterprise. However, his immediate inspiration and direction came from the satiric movement of the last decade of the sixteenth century, which ended abruptly through the interposition of the ecclesiastical authorities acting in the interest of offended morality.

The movement was partly the result of conscious imitation of the Latin satirists and partly a natural reaction to a changing social world. The social forces must now be briefly examined, if only to establish the prejudices of the audiences, which, in a measure, dictated Jonson's choice of characters and his methods of presenting them. For in the final analysis it was the disordered economic structure which stimulated writers of all sorts with zeal to reform the world in which they lived. Yet to the Renaissance moralists social abuses were not the result of laws operating independently of man, but the work of wicked individuals. Hence they fought for improved conditions by mirroring, anatomizing, and scourging contemporary fools and knaves. The fact is clearly illustrated in all works of this sort—for example, in Robert Crowley's *The voyce of the laste trumpet*, first printed in 1549. The book is a series of poetic sermons addressed, in turn, to representatives of the several degrees in the carefully terraced social and economic structure. The text of each homily is, "Be content with thy lot." Though Crowley is cognizant of the crying social abuses of his time, he never suggests revolt or class movement. He believes that the correction of social wrongs can be accomplished only through the ethical reform of individuals. For instance, he tells the yeoman, if his landlord raise his rent, to pay it without question



and then pray to God for his master's amendment.<sup>1</sup> Later in the poem Crowley appeals to the gentleman not to raise the yeoman's rent above a figure sanctioned by custom, because he would not like it if his lord the King made similar exorbitant demands of him. The yeoman as well as the gentleman has a right to live "in his degre."

Although the remedies for social abuses were thus to be sought in reformation of evil individuals, the many exhortations to ethical amendment that are found in English literature of the sixteenth century form incontestable evidence of the serious economic dislocations of the time. The causes of these phenomena are well known and need be reviewed here only in summary fashion.\* The most obvious was the swift growth of capitalism and its ruthless extension to agriculture. The discomfort caused by this economic revolution was intensified by a century-long rise in the prices of commodities, due primarily to the flow of precious metals into European commerce, which began, in the fifteenth century, with the increased production of silver in Austrian territories and the discovery of African gold by the Portuguese. The increase was accelerated, in the sixteenth century, by the Spaniards' exploitation of the gold and silver mines of Central and South America. The rise in prices caused the greatest discomfort to those whose incomes were more or less fixed—that is,

"If thy Landlorde do rayse thy rent  
Se thou pay it wyth quietnes:  
And pray to God omnipotent,  
To take from hym his cruelnes."

(*The voyce of the laste trumpet blown  
bi the seventh Angel* [London, 1549],

"The Yeomans lesson," sig. A7<sup>v</sup>.)

"For as thou doest hold of thy kynge  
So doeth thy tenaunt holde of the  
And is allowed a lyveynge  
As wel as thou in his degre."

(*Ibid.*, "The Gentilmans lesson," sig. C7.)

\*The following works may be consulted for full treatment of these matters: R. H. Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1912); Georg Wiebe, *Zur Geschichte der Preisrevolution des XVI. und XVII. Jahrhunderts* (Leipzig, 1895), pp. 276-77; E. P. Cheyney, *Social Changes in England in the Sixteenth Century as Reflected in Contemporary Literature*, Pt. 1 ("Publications of the University of Pennsylvania, Series in Philology, Literature and Archaeology," Vol. IV, No 2; Boston, 1895); Earl J. Hamilton, *American Treasure and the Price Revolution in Spain, 1501-1650* ("Harvard Economic Studies," XLIII; Cambridge, Mass., 1934), pp. 205-10; John U. Nef, "Prices and Industrial Capitalism in France and England, 1540-1640," *The Economic History Review*, VII, 155-85.

to landlords receiving customary rents, to the clergy, the schools, and certain groups of wage earners. But it brought an advance in financial status to traders and to farmers who owned their land and produced a surplus. These facts must be remembered by all students of the satirical literature of the period. The interests of its authors were obviously identified with those of the people suffering from the economic changes; so they directed much of their ridicule and moral indignation against the beneficiaries of the new financial conditions and those in control of the newly important money market.

The rise in the cost of living, caused primarily by the discovery of fresh sources for the supply of gold and silver, was aggravated by other phenomena. First in importance among these was the deliberate debasing of the coinage, which began under Henry VIII and was continued by Edward VI; and, second, the serious shrinking of the volume of English agricultural produce.<sup>4</sup> The shortage of foodstuffs was the indirect result of the rise in the price of wool, in the European market, during the years 1547 to 1575. In consequence, sheep raising had become the most profitable business for the landowner,<sup>5</sup> who, confronted by inflation, was concerned to keep his real income from shrinking. Therefore, he began in every sort of devious way to dispossess his customary agricultural tenants and to convert their land into pasture for sheep. The new town-bred gentry who had been given title to the greater part of the land of the defunct monasteries, inheriting no sense of responsibility to their tenants, were pitiless landlords. The large-scale inclosure of arable land converted many among the wage-earning agricultural population into vagrants. A favorite way of forcing tenants off the land was rack-renting, which was an economically natural effort of one class in society to maintain its favored economic position at the expense of another. But the dispossessed, and the preachers and satirists who spoke for them, stigmatized the activity of their oppressors as shameless greed.

The withdrawal of large tracts of land from tillage led to a shortage of wheat, which was accentuated by occasional failure of the

<sup>4</sup>These ideas are expressed in approximately the same form in Eli Hekscher, *Mercantilism*, tr. Mendel Shapiro (2 vols.; London, 1935), I, 42 (quoted L. C. Knights, *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* [London, 1937], pp. 141-42).

<sup>5</sup>James E. Thorold Rogers, *A History of Agriculture and Prices in England* (1866-1902), III-VI, *passim*.

crop in many parts of England and by an increase in the population of the country. As a result, there arose another type of antisocial individual—the speculator who bought wheat and held it for a monopoly profit. To him were applied the opprobrious terms, fore-staller, regrater, and engrosser of grain.

These social maladjustments became the object of concerted attack as early as the middle of the century—first in sermons. For example, Hugh Latimer, in a series of homilies delivered before King Edward VI during March and April, 1549, assailed extortioners, "rente-rearers," covetous leasemongers, graziers, inclosers, and regraters.<sup>6</sup> Such architects of social misery, who were quite humanly seeking means of economic self-preservation, Latimer branded as slaves of the deadly sin of avarice. In so doing he was but insisting upon continued acceptance of all the canons of feudal morality. Attacks in the same temper continued until the end of the century, in too great bulk and variety to be here reviewed. However, those expressed in epigrammatic or quasi-dramatic form have the most direct bearing upon the particular literary movement under discussion.

In 1550 Robert Crowley, for example, in his *One and thyrtye Epigrammes*, joined the assault. A few of the poems—the one on "Bawdes" is an illustration—strike at moral corruption; a few, as in the case of "Nice Wyves," at social folly. But most of them are concerned with such creatures of the new economic conditions as "Leasemongars," "Marchauntes," "Rente Raysters," and "Usurars."

Easily the most dramatic of early Tudor satires against these economic abuses is William Bullein's *Dialogue . . . against the fever Pestilence*, written about 1564.<sup>7</sup> The author's avowed intention was to disseminate information concerning the proper treatment of the plague. In form, the dialogue is an equivalent of a morality play or a dance of death. The climax of the drama comes at the appearance of Mors to claim Civis and to carry him off. But the real purpose of the writer is to attack avarice. He presents, as the most abject slave of this deadly sin, Antonius, the moneylender. And the two lawyers,

<sup>6</sup>Hugh Latimer, *Seven Sermons before Edward VI*, ed. Edward Arber (London, 1869), pp. 39, 40, 49-50.

<sup>7</sup>*The Select Works of Robert Crowley*, ed. J. M. Cowper (Early English Text Society, Ext. Ser., No. 15 [1872]), pp. 5-51, *passim*.

<sup>8</sup>William Bullein, *A Dialogue bothe pleasaunte and pietifull, wherein is a goodly regimēte against the fever Pestilence* (London: John Kingston, 1564).

who scheme to become his heir, suggest the swoop of the similar birds of prey that hover around Volpone in Ben Jonson's bitter comedy of that title. Even the physician is ruled by greed, for he neglects the poor in order to gouge his wealthy patients. All twelve of the social types that appear are the objects of the mordant ridicule of an observer who knows that the life of each is in constant and imminent danger of death from the plague.

Reference has been made to these three works merely in order to remind the reader that the social and economic evils of growing capitalism had been frequently remarked by various sorts of social commentators as early as the middle of the century. However, for several reasons, the alleged villains of the new economic era did not become the targets of a concerted and extended social attack until the 1590's. The explanation of the delay of the full outburst of wrath is not far to seek. In the first place, the steady growth, for half a century, of the forces just described added, year by year, to the burdens created by the economic confusion, until they became almost intolerable. Furthermore, from 1593 to 1599 the rise in prices had been violently accelerated, because of the partial failure of the wheat crop for a number of years and in 1596 its total failure. The seriousness of the situation is reflected in a rising storm of popular indignation. The violence and extent of the exasperation are revealed in the *Journals of the House of Commons* and the *Acts of the Privy Council*. These state papers are filled with protests against inclosures and with reports of mob violence directed against evictions. Many laws to curb the evils were advocated and a number were passed.<sup>9</sup> The related evil of the engrossing of wheat also met with organized complaint, as early as 1589.<sup>10</sup> In that year a bill was introduced into Parliament "to avoid the abuses grown in forestalling, regrating and ingrossing."<sup>11</sup> But in spite of such measures, the continued failure of the wheat crop from 1596 to 1598 increased the operations of the

<sup>9</sup>See *Acts of the Privy Council*, N.S., XXVI (London, 1902); also *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic*, for the reigns of Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth (London, 1856-71); and Sir Simonds D'Ewes, *The Journals of All the Parliaments during the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1682).

<sup>10</sup>For 1589 there appears in the records of the Privy Council a petition from the inhabitants of Sudbury in Suffolk, "by which they did complaine that great dearth and scarsetie of corne by meanes of certaine persons that use regrating and forstalling of the marketts and engrossing of corne." (*Acts of the Privy Council*, N.S., XVIII [Norwich, 1899], 275.)

<sup>11</sup>D'Ewes, *op. cit.*, p. 432.

manipulators of the food supply and intensified their danger to society.

A second cause for the further enfranchisement of the acquisitive spirit in England after 1588, and so for the sudden flowering of the literature of protest, was the apparently growing influence of the Puritan ethos during the same period. This system of social behavior sanctified, as it were, the individual's exploitation of his new economic opportunities. The Catholic sin of avarice was transformed into the Protestant virtue of thrift. Success in the discharge of one's business became not only an approved form of the ethical life but also a service to the Lord, and even presumptive evidence of the soul's salvation. Thus the capitalism of the time acquired the sort of religious approbation without which it could not have flourished comfortably in England.<sup>12</sup> The reasons for the antipathy of the university wits against the new acquisitive spirit are not difficult to imagine. They retained, even in the midst of the commercial enthusiasm of London, the conservative and aristocratic ethical and social prejudices which they had imbibed at the universities and which they had seen expressed in all the previous literature of protest.

The extended attention which the satirists gave to both the mannered courtier and the social upstart reflects another social situation that became acute during the last years of Elizabeth's reign. Attacks on certain aspects of life at court, it is true, had become a literary convention. They had long been leveled against the hypocrisy, falsehood, debauchery, and cruelty which resided there. These abuses, however, were not conspicuous at the English court between the years 1588 and 1603. But an equally serious situation confronted a gentleman who aspired to an assured place in the entourage of the aging Queen. As she grew older and more capricious, the problem of securing and maintaining her favor became increasingly difficult. Yet many a courtier's actual means of subsistence depended on her bounty. To be sure, she seldom rewarded her favorites with direct gifts of money. Her thrift did not permit such liberality. Instead, she commonly gave the successful applicant a reversion to an office, usually a sinecure, "or the monopoly of the licensing or sale of some article of import or manufacture."<sup>13</sup> This arbitrary granting of

<sup>12</sup>Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, tr. Talcott Parsons (New York, 1930), pp. 80 ff.

<sup>13</sup>E. P. Cheyney, *A History of England from the Defeat of the Armada to the Death of Elizabeth* (New York, 1926), I, 50.

monopolies became a scandal. Popular opposition to the policy is reflected in the cases recorded in the *Acts of the Privy Council*, particularly during the years from 1596 to 1598.<sup>14</sup>

To obtain one of these reversions a gentleman had to ingratiate himself with an old woman whose vanity and love of ostentation increased with the years. Her taste in clothes and in court ceremony ran more and more to the Gothic and bizarre. Hence, to catch the Queen's eye the courtier chose to adopt a reptilian obsequiousness and to affect a pretentious originality, in his costume and social attitudes, that to any judicial eye and sound taste was ludicrous. "Made all of 'clothes and face,'" he had innumerable imitators among the newly rich citizens, their wives, and their children. Still, the persistence and intensity of the attack made upon the upstarts demand a more adequate explanation than their offensive manners. This may be found in the threat which such parvenus, amply provided with plenty of easy money, made to the traditional cohesions and groupings of English society. The old aristocracy, and the writers catering to it, followed a sound instinct of self-preservation in repelling with all their intellectual and moral energy the imminent disruption of their social world. In years characterized by such economic, social, and moral confusion it is no wonder that the single protests of individuals earlier in the century were succeeded by a chorus of outcry.

## II. *The Prose Protests*

The earlier attacks on these familiar abuses, as we have seen, had usually been launched either by preachers or professed moralists, all of whom took a similar ethical and religious point of view and adopted the same hortatory methods of inducing reform. During the last two decades of the century the temper of this literature of protest suffered a complete change. Its authors began to write primarily for a London audience composed largely of university-bred men. Having come to seek their fortune in the city, they formed a kind of jaunty intellectual proletariat. They were entirely occupied with mundane affairs and had no appetite for harangues or solemn warnings against vice. They preferred to discern the ludicrous in folly and the grotesque in sin. And their classically trained minds demanded form

<sup>14</sup>*Acts of the Privy Council*, N.S., XXV (London, 1901), xiii-xiv, 16, 43, 49, 197, 486-87; XXVI, xxxiv. D'Ewes (*op. cit.*, p. 554) records the appointment of a committee to investigate "sundry enormities growing by Patents of Priviledge and Monopolies."

and conciseness in the works they read. To serve as commentators on the new extravagant world for these bold, gay, intelligent men who played a part in it, at least two groups of satirists appeared. One wrote prose works fashioned on various sorts of medieval and early-Renaissance models; the other composed formal verse satire fashioned on the work of Latin satirists like Juvenal and epigrammatists like Martial.

The authors composing the former group, although ostensibly devoted to the exposure of evil, were clearly amused by the license and folly which they discovered. This was not the traditional English attitude. Even as late as the 1580's Stubbes in his *Anatomy of Abuses* (1583) and Lodge in *An Alarum against Usurers* (1584) found the wickedness which they described in the world to be revolting and socially dangerous. Nashe, however, in the very title of his *Anatomie of Absurditie* (1589) marks the difference between his attitude and that of his predecessors. What they found abhorrent, he thought entertaining, and even funny. Robert Greene's cony-catching pamphlets were also written from the same comic point of view, although his professed purpose was to warn country people against the sharpers of the city. His *Notable Discovery of Coosenage* (1591) has an identical object. In the preface to this volume Greene explains that he had associated with such scoundrels as he exposes, merely "as a spie to have an insight into their knaveries." And by dedicating the work to those who are in danger of becoming victims of the nefarious practices he describes, he seeks to assume the role of a social policeman. *The Defence of Conny catching* (1592) is a burlesque encomium, in which a thief maintains that respectable people are guilty of much worse forms of deceit than he. *A Quip for an Upstart Courtier* (1592) is a debate between Velvet Breeches and Cloth Breeches, in which the former, a social upstart, is made ridiculous when compared to the latter, an honest tradesman. The tract does excoriate the luxury and extravagance of the newly rich and arouses sympathy for the victims of their oppression. But the jury to whom the issue between the two is referred is composed of middle-class citizens. This fact offers Greene an opportunity to pass in critical review representatives of the different trades and occupations of contemporary London and to laugh at their peculiarities and mannerisms. These last two works are medieval types of satire which Greene has

forced to express the unique combination of anger and amused contempt provoked in him by the mad, cruel world that he knew. Nashe in *Pierce Penilesse His Supplication to the Divell* (1592) also used a medieval form through which to expose and to castigate evil and roguery. Each object of his satire is a slave of some one of the seven deadly sins and, taken as a group, they form a composite picture of the follies and enormities of his time.

This group of social pamphleteers introduced into their work another element which had a strong influence upon subsequent satire, whether expressed in prose, poetry, or drama—namely, personal lampoon. That form of ridicule is as old as literature. It was the very essence of old comedy. It sprang into new and vigorous life in the works which poured from the Marprelate press for a few years subsequent to 1588. These Marprelate tracts are ostensibly documents on the Puritan side of an ecclesiastical controversy, but their method is one traditional in religious satire of the sixteenth century—personal ridicule and defamation. The impudent and boisterous raillery of the authors blackens the private lives of the individual bishops, and exposes even their personal and domestic misfortunes. The style of these works frequently suggests that developed by such stage clowns as Tarlton and Kempe in their monologues.<sup>18</sup> Both kinds of literature exhibit the same mock logic and headlong spontaneity and glee. The Marprelate controversialists debased social satire into a form of personal abuse. Other writers imitated their scandalous art—Nashe in particular. His two invectives against Gabriel Harvey, and the latter's answer in *Pierces Supererogation* (1593), make prodigal use of the ample resources of personal abuse offered by irony, sarcasm, buffoonery, and sheer billingsgate. Nashe is especially clever in taming this material to serve him in the creation of witty forms of burlesque and imaginative dialogue. He claims as his master the notorious Pietro Aretino—an assertion which, though possessing innate probability, has never been critically examined. The foregoing brief review of well-known material has been made only to recall the important part that personal lampoon and invective played in fixing the conventions of satire during the last decade of the sixteenth century.

<sup>18</sup>J. Dover Wilson, "The Marprelate Controversy," in *The Cambridge History of English Literature*, III (1930), chap. 17.



Although Jonson's comical satires have no direct and formal connection with this large body of satiric prose, it serves as a manifestation of the intellectual and social temper of the time from which they issued. Furthermore, the prevalence of that spirit—moral, sarcastic, and savage rather than merry—was doubtless the cause of the revival of interest in formal Latin satire, which (particularly as practiced by Juvenal) could be easily accommodated to the impudent realism the pamphleteers had made a literary fashion. The method of classical satire suggested a manner of anatomizing, mirroring, and scourging fools and knaves that was certain to appeal to the cultivated literary taste of the university-bred in London. As we shall see, Jonson was able to transform its devices into constructive features of his new comedy. Accordingly, we must now turn, first, to a brief consideration of the theories of satire which prevailed during the Renaissance, and then to the achievements of formal poetic satire in England during the 1590's.

### III. Renaissance Theories of Satire

All forms of Renaissance satire were supported by an ample critical theory. To it, with few exceptions, writers of verse satire in England during the sixteenth century turned for guidance, and Jonson evidently took care to fashion his new comical satire in such a way as not to contravene any of its tenets. These principles in their simplest and most popular form were known to every Elizabethan schoolboy, for they appeared in an essay prefaced to practically all the editions of Terence which were printed, either in England or on the Continent, between 1500 and 1600. The essay was written by Aelius Donatus, a grammarian of the fourth century. After giving an account of Terence's life, he presents a brief history of the development of tragedy and comedy in classical times.

Donatus, like Scaliger, believes *satyra* to be the legitimate heir of *vetus comoedia*. He assumes that the writers of old Greek comedy abused their freedom so scandalously that they had to be restrained. *Satyra* was thus devised to avoid a legal prohibition without destroying an author's freedom to criticize and correct his contemporaries as he chose. But, unlike Scaliger, Donatus accepts without reservation the theory that *satyra* was, in both a literal and an imaginative sense, the utterance of satyrs. And he and all the world knew that they

were dirty and lascivious woodland deities. Partly because the satirist assumed that he was the heir to the nature and functions of the satyr, he was allowed to attack the faults of the citizens in whatever harsh and savage manner he chose to adopt. But he was forbidden to identify any wrongdoers by name. In the course of time the citizens objected to even this anonymous form of rebuke. It, too, cast a very unfavorable light upon the life of the community and indirectly upon the individuals who composed it. Consequently, they silenced the authors of *satyra*. Though balked for a second time, the impulse toward satire was irrepressible and it promptly invented for itself still another form, called *nova comoedia*.<sup>18</sup>

Donatus clearly regards *vetus comoedia*, *satyra*, and *nova comoedia* as allied types of corrective writing, one succeeding the other in a direct line of descent. Ignoring the proper literary form of such writing, he prescribes its moral tone and its methods of castigation, and he explains that its very existence depends upon social sanctions. Although he could hardly have had any clear idea of the nature of the early Latin *satura*, his theory of the origin of satire is less in accord with that of Scaliger and Jonson than with that of modern scholars who hold that satire was not a metamorphosis of *vetus comoedia* but the outgrowth of a native folk drama called *satura*.<sup>19</sup> The present belief that this was a crude play is based on a famous passage in the seventh book of Livy's history. There he says that during a virulent attack of the plague the consuls ordered stage plays to be performed as a means of appeasing the wrath of the gods. From Etruria were summoned actors who, while dancing to the music of the flute, sang and illustrated the meaning of their songs with appro-

<sup>18</sup>This passage is a summary of the following important sentences in Donatus' essay: "Sed cum Poetae abuti licentius stylo, & passim laedere ex libidine coepissent plures bonos: ne quisquam in alterum carmen infame proponeret, lege lata, silvère. Et hinc de inde aliud genus fabulae, id est *satyra* sumpsit exordium. quae à satyris, quos illos semper ac petulantes deos scimus esse, vocitata est. etsi aliunde nomen traxisse prave putant alij. Haec quae *Satyra* dicitur, eiusmodi fuit, ut in ea quamvis duro & veluti agresti modo, de vitijs civium tamen sine ullo proprij nominis titulo carmen esset. Quod item genus comoediae multis obfuit Poëtis, cum in suspicionem potentibus civibus venissent illorum facta descripsisse in peius, ac deformasse genus stylo carminis. . . . Hoc igitur, quo supra diximus modo, coacti omittere *satyram*, aliud genus carminis . . . novam comoediam reperere Poetae." ("Terentii vita, et de tragoedia ac comoedia non pauca, ex Aelio Donato," in *P. Terentii comoediae opera des Erasmi Roter. Castigatae* [Basle, 1534], sig. B3<sup>r</sup> & v.)

<sup>19</sup>Cf. H. M. Hopkins, "Dramatic *Satura* in Relation to Book *Satura* and *Fabula Togata*," *Transactions and Proceedings of the American Philological Association*, XXXI, 1-li.

priate gestures. Tuscan imitators of their simple professional art added antiphonal jesting, and lengthened and ordered both the music and the verses until "complete satyres [impletas modis satyras]" came into being.<sup>19</sup>

Latin satire as written by Horace suggests a connection with an earlier histrionic form of literature. It is full of short dramatic scenes, the most famous of which is undoubtedly the author's encounter with the bore—a dialogue, with the action of the participants clearly indicated.<sup>20</sup> Horace also puts his attack on legacy hunters into the form of a colloquy, between Ulysses and Tiresias.<sup>21</sup> He writes introductions to other satires which are pure dramatic dialogues. Such, for example, is Horace's meeting with Catus as he is rushing home to write down some new recipes that he has just had given him.<sup>22</sup> Sometimes a little dramatic scene appears in the midst of a satire, as, for example, the dialogue between an excluded lover and his slave.

<sup>19</sup>Here is presented, first the Latin text of the pertinent passage, and then Philemon Holland's Elizabethan translation of it:

"Caeterum parva quoque (ut ferme principia omnia) & ea ipsa peregrina res fuit. Sine carmine ullo, sine imitandorum carminum actu, ludiones ex Hetruria acciti, ad tibicinis modos saltantes, haud indecoros motus more Thusco dabant. Imitari deinde eos inventus, simul inconditis inter se jocularia fundentes versibus cepere: nec absoni à voce motus erant. Accepta itaque res, saepiusque usurpando excitata. Vernaculis artificibus, quia hister Thusco verbo ludio vocabatur, nomen histrionibus inditum: qui non sicut ante Fescennino versu similem incompositum temere ac rudem alternis jacebant, sed impletas modis satyras descripto iam ad tibicinem cantu, motuque congruenti peragebant." (*Titii Livii Patavini Romanae historiae principis, libri omnes* [London, 1589], p. 186.)

"But (as all beginnings lightly are) a small thing (God wot) it was at first: without song and meetre, without gesture and action sutable unto song and verse, and the same also meere outlandish. For the plaiers, who were sent for out of Hetruria, as they daunced the measures to the minstrell and sound of flute, gestured not undecently withall, after the Tuscan fashion. But in processe of time the youth began to imitate and counterfeite them, jesting pleasantly besides one with another, and singing in rude rimes and disordered meetre: and their gesture was sorting with their jestes and ditties. Thus was this thing first taken up, and thus with much use and often exercise, practised. And heereupon our owne countrie Actors and artificiall professors of this feate, were called *Histriones*, of *Hister* a Tuscan word, which signifieth a plaier or dauncer. But these uttered not (as they used afore time) in their turnes one after another, disordred, confused, and rude verses, like to the loose and baudie Fescennine rimes: but went through and rehearsed out, whole Satyres, full of muscally measures, with a set consort of song also, to the instrument of the minstrell, and with gesture agreeable therunto. Certaine yeares after, *Livius*, who was the first that after the use of Satyres, ventured to set forth an Enterlude, . . ." (*The Romane Historie Written by T. Livius of Padua. . . . Translated out of Latine into English, by Philemon Holland* [London, 1600], p. 250.)

<sup>20</sup>Satires I. ix.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, II. v.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, iv.

This is in itself a colloquy within the envelope of a still more ambitious dialogue,<sup>22</sup> between Horace and Damasippus, soon after the latter's conversion to Stoicism. The first satire of Persius is a dialogue between Persius and an ill-natured critic who tries to dissuade the author from writing satire.

These dramatic characteristics of Latin satire were recognized by the critics and scholars of the Renaissance, even though they did not know their provenance. Certainly no contemporary of Jonson would have attributed the vestiges of drama in the Roman satire to its descent from *satura* by way of some lost "*fabulae togatae*." Such knowledge as is to be found explicit in Livy seems to have been completely and strangely forgotten during the Renaissance. A few critics accepted the tradition that Latin satire was a late equivalent of *vetus comoedia*, but the common belief was that the form was descended from the satyr play, of which Euripides' *Cyclops* was the only extant example. On the basis of mere verbal similarity between "satire" and "satyr," they reared an elaborate critical structure.

This theory appears in simple outline in the work of Polydore Virgil. He writes:

The Satires had their name of uplandishe Goddes, that were rude, lassivious and wanton of behavior.

There bee two kyndes of Satyres, the one is both emong the Grekes and Romanes of auncient tyme used, for the diversitie of Meters, muche like a Comody, savyng that it is more wanton. . . . The second maner of Satires is very railyng onely ordeined to rebuke vice, and devised of the Romaines, upon this occasion When the Poetes, that wrote the olde Comodies, used to handle for their argumentes, not onely fained matters, but also thynges dooen in deede, whiche although at the firste, it was tollerable, yet afterwarde, it fortunied by reason that thei inveighed so liberally & largely, at their pleasure, against every man that there was a law made, that no man should from thencefurthe reprehend any man by name. Then the Romaines in the place of those Comodies, substituted suche Satires, as thei had newly imagined.<sup>23</sup>

Virgil's pronouncement, in its confusion of various types of early drama, is characteristic of the critical opinion of the time. He seems to

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, iii. 259-71.

<sup>23</sup>*An abridgement of the notable worke of Polidore Vergile . . . Compendiously gathered by Thomas Langley* (London, 1551), fols. xix, xviii<sup>r</sup> & v. The first edition of this translation was published in 1546.

regard "satyre" as a mixture of *vetus comoedia*, satyr play, and a postulated primitive Latin comedy to which he is not able to give the name "satura."

The same confusion between satire and satyr play, and concerning the relation of both to *vetus comoedia*, appears in the English critics of the late sixteenth century—in none more picturesquely than in Puttenham. He begins with the conventional idea that literature originated in man's eagerness to honor his gods. It next naturally assumed the function of a preacher bent on correcting human faults. The grave and wise men of that early time, possessing no large halls in which to assemble people, took advantage of the occasions when the folk were gathered in some hallowed place for worship of their deities, to utter salutary rebukes. Because this direct method of correction made the people ashamed rather than afraid, the ancient poets invented

three kinds of poems reprehensive, to wit, the *Satyre*, the *Comedie*, & the *Tragedie*: and the first and most bitter invective against vice and vicious men, was the *Satyre*: which to th'intent their bitterness should breede none ill will, either to the Poets, or to the recitours, (which could not have bene chosen if they had bene openly knowen) and besides to make their admonitions and reproofs seeme graver and of more efficacie, they made wise as if the gods of the woods, whom they called *Satyres* or *Silvanes*, should appeare and recite those verses of rebuke, whereas in deede they were but disguised persons under the shape of *Satyres* . . . whereupon the Poets inventours of the devise were called *Satyristes*.<sup>24</sup>

Puttenham regarded old comedy as the successor to this sort of satire, devised when the earlier form of rebuke

seemed not to the finer heads sufficiently perswasive, nor so popular as if it were reduced into action of many persons, or by many voyces lively represented to the eare and eye, so as a man might thinke it were even now a doing.<sup>25</sup>

Naturally, some of the characteristic methods of satire were bequeathed to old comedy, which

followed next after the *Satyre*, & by that occasion was somewhat sharpe and bitter after the nature of the *Satyre*, openly & by expresse names taxing men more maliciously and impudently then became,

<sup>24</sup>Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, sigs. E4<sup>v</sup>-F.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, sig. F.

so as they were enforced for feare of quarell & blame to disguise their players with strange apparell, and by colouring their faces and carying hattts & capps of diverse fashions to make them selves lesse knowen. But as time & experience do reforme every thing that is amisse, so this bitter poeme called the old *Comedy*, being disused and taken away, the new *Comedy* came in place, more civill and pleasant a great deale and not touching any man by name.\*

A slightly different view is presented by Thomas Lodge. Though believing that "satyre" succeeded rather than preceded tragedy, he, too, regards the Greek form as the first expression of dramatic satire. His account of the history of the early stage is equally a product of his imagination. He believes that after the first poets had composed hymns of thanksgiving to the gods for plentiful harvests, they invented a kind of didactic play which presented

the miserable fal of haples princes, The reuinous decay of many cou[n]tryes, yet not content with this, they presented the lives of *Satyrs*, So that they might wiselye under the abuse of that name, discover the follies of many theyr folish fellow citesens. and those monsters were then, as our parasites are now adayes: suche, as with pleasure reprehended abuse.<sup>7</sup>

In the various ways above enumerated, relations between indefinitely conceived and largely imagined satyr plays, *vetus comoedia*, and satire were asserted by the critics of the Renaissance. Satire, they taught, was in origin a rude form of ridicule designed to purge simple men of their faults and was composed to serve as the characteristic utterance of crude sylvan gods—hence its harshness and license. Jonson was familiar with these doctrines.

This widely held belief in the close relationship between satire and satyr play is responsible for part of the Renaissance theory about the proper emotional tone of satire. The first and most important postulate was that satire, having originated in the mouths of the uncouth shaggy creatures of the Greek forests, ought to maintain the roughness and harshness which characterized their legendary actions. Even occasional obscurity might be more than tolerated; it

\**Ibid.*, sig. Fr & v.

<sup>7</sup>Lodge, [*Reply*], sig. C2v. This supposed connection between satire and the satyrs of Greek mythology was almost universally held until the appearance in 1605 of Isaac Casaubon's *De satyrica Graecorum poesi et Romanorum satira, libri duo*.

might be cherished as proof that the coarseness of these pristine goat-songs had not been refined away. The inchoate roughness of Lucilius, the severity of Juvenal's invective, and the bitterness and obscurity of Persius confirmed the Renaissance satirists in their determination to be downright and raw. Adrian Junius in his *Nomenclator* expresses the popular view: "Satyra, Invectium in mores poema, Σατύρα à Satyrorum petulantia dicta. Un esguillon des vices. A nipping kind of poetrie, tawnting and sharpelie shewing men their faults."<sup>28</sup> Puttenham develops the same idea. He writes: "There was yet another kind of Poet, who intended to taxe the common abuses and vice of the people in rough and bitter speaches, and their invectives were called *Satyres*, and them selves *Satyricques*. Such were *Lucilius*, *Juvenall* and *Persius* among the Latines, & with us he that wrote the booke called *Piers plowman*."<sup>29</sup>

(Bitterness and bluntness were approved by the literary critics, but these virtues were never to descend to the vices of railing, scoffing, or scurrility. Such forms of ridicule were appropriate in the mouth of a buffoon but never in the writing of a self-respecting satirist.) Puttenham expresses the accepted opinion in a comment he makes upon Skelton. He calls him "a sharpe Satirist, but with more rayling and scoffery then became a Poet Lawreat, such among the Greekes were called *Pantomimi*, with us Buffons, altogether applying their wits to Scurrilities & other ridiculous matters."<sup>30</sup>

The early writers of English satire repeatedly asserted that their purpose was serious and their methods restrained. None of them conceived the term "satire" as exclusively applicable to any one literary form: it described many different combinations of reformatory social purpose and literary tone. Barclay in his Prologue to *The Ship of Fools* (1509) shows how loose was his conception of the genre, by stating that the Latin poets wrote "satyrs which the greks named Comedyes." In using the word "satyr," apparently for the first time in the English language, he indicates what meaning he attached to the term. It was primarily the reprehension of folly; yet it is correctly used to describe the work of "olde Poetes Satyriens" who de-

<sup>28</sup>Adrianus Junius, *The Nomenclator, or Remembrancer . . . Written . . . in Latine, Greeke, French and other forrein tongues: and now in English, by John Higgs* (London, 1585), p. 11.

<sup>29</sup>*Op. cit.*, sig. E2v.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, sig. Iv.

voted their efforts to reproving of "the synnes and ylnes of the peple."<sup>21</sup> That is to say, Barclay makes no distinction between the correction of sin and the purgation of folly, either or both services being the proper business of the satirist.

Barclay expresses in the same preface another idea, which was to become an important article of faith in the satirist's credo. He insists that the correct method of his art is that of complete realism. His purpose is to force every man to behold in *The Ship of Fools* the course of his own life and his misgoverned manners, "as he sholde beholde the shadowe of the fygure of his visage within a bright Myrrour." The notion rescues satire from its age-long subservience to allegory and marks the beginning of a new conception of the art and of its adoption of an entirely different intellectual procedure. Yet Barclay, while advancing these ideas, retains his faith in the importance of the service which satire renders to society.

The moral dignity of satire continues to be reasserted by all those who write it. Sir David Lindsay, it will be remembered, called his late morality play *Ane Satyre of the Thrie Estaits, in commendation of vertew and vituperation of vyce* (1602), first presented before James V in 1540.<sup>22</sup> In choosing this title for his play, he was perhaps only attempting to enhance its importance in the eyes of the learned. But his deeper purpose was evidently to emphasize its realism and the harsh, direct way in which it attacked the series of courtiers who took the guise of contemporary figures. Or, to paraphrase Professor

<sup>21</sup>"Satyra inter-pretatur reprehentio. Speculum stultorum. This present Boke myght have ben callyd nat inconvenyently the Satyr (that is to say) the reprehencion of foullysshnes. but the neweltye of the name was more plesant unto the fyrst actour to call it the Shyp of foles: For in lyke wyse as olde Poetes Satyriens in dyvers Poesyes conjoynd reprieved the synnes and ylnes of the peple at that tyme lyvyng: so and in lyke wyse this our Boke representeth unto the iyen of the redars the states and condicions of men: so that every man may behold within the same the cours of his lyfe and his mysgoverned maners as he sholde beholde the shadowe of the fygure of the visage within a bright Myrrour." (Sebastian Brant, *Shyp of Follys*, tr. Alexander Barclay [London, 1509], fol. xii<sup>v</sup>.)

The first sentence of this passage, in the Latin of Locher as quoted by Barclay, is, "Potuisset praesens hic noster libellus/ non inconcinne satyra nuncupari: sed auctorem novitas tituli dilectavit. sicuti enim prisci satyrici: variis poematibus contextis: scelera ac pravitates mortalium reprehendebant." (*Ibid.*, fol. xii.)

<sup>22</sup>For the text, see *The Works of Sir David Lindsay of the Mount, 1490-1555*, ed. Douglas Hamer (Scottish Text Society, 3d Ser.; Edinburgh), II (1931).



W. Roy Mackenzie," Lindsay wished to announce that he had transformed the general stimulations to righteous living exercised by the older moralities into a daring exposure of conditions at a court which he knew.

The author of the tragedy of Collingbourne in the 1563 edition of *A Myrroure for Magistrates* puts into the mouth of his protagonist a denunciation of tyrants, under whose reign the free expression of the salutary social corrective of satire is violently suppressed and its practitioners condemned to death. The rhyme for which Collingbourne was convicted and executed,

The Cat, the Rat, and Lovel our Dog,  
Do rule al England, under a Hog,

used the conventional methods of art approved in all healthy societies and sanctified by the work of Horace and Juvenal, and also by the authors of "tragicke playes." Yet the tyrant whom his lines indirectly struck would not endure the deserved sting. Under the rule of such creatures the life of a satirist is perilous:

Be rough in ryme, and then they say you rayle,  
Though Juvenal so be, that makes no matter:  
With Jeremye you shal be had to jayle,  
Or forst with Marciall, Ceasars faultes to flatter,  
Clarkes must be taught to clawe and not to clatter:  
Free Hellicon, & franke Pernassus hylles,  
Are Helly hauntes, & ranke pernicious yyles."

George Gascoigne explains, in his dedication of *The Steele Glas* to Lord Grey of Wilton, that the work had been composed to make amends for the love poems in the composition of which he wasted his youth. This idea is developed in the commendatory verses by Nicholas Bowyer which preface the volume:

From layes of Love, to Satyres sadde and sage,  
Our Poet turnes, the travaile of his time,  
And as he pleasde, the vaine of youthful age,  
With pleasant penne, employde in loving ryme:  
So now he seekes, the gravest to delight,  
With workes of worth, much better than they showe."

<sup>22</sup>*The English Moralities from the Point of View of Allegory* (Boston, 1914), p. 94.

<sup>23</sup>*A Myrroure for Magistrates* (London: Thomas Marshe, 1563), "Howe Collingbourne was cruelly executed for making a foolishe rime," ll. 69-70, 8-14.

<sup>24</sup>*The Steele Glas. A Satyre compiled by George Gascoigne Esquire. Together with the Complainte of Phylomene. An Elegie devised by the same Author* (London: Richard Smith, 1576), sig. A4<sup>r</sup> & v.

The foregoing passages reveal another characteristic of these English satires. In writing them their authors were consciously devising an antidote to the influence of the popular poetic cult of Petrarchism and its manifold developments. They thus took seriously the discharge of their corrective moral functions. They looked their world in the face and distinguished the fair lineaments from the foul. They protected the good, reproved the vicious, and reprehended and exposed the foolish. In brief, they served as vigilant policemen and social teachers to the entire community.

Another characteristic which satire was supposed to have inherited from the satyr play is reflected in Jonson's work. This was its (peculiar mixture of comedy and tragedy) of grave and gay. Horace in his *Ars Poetica* explains the origin of the phenomenon, in a passage which was familiar to all the critics of the Renaissance. The lines as they appear in Sir Theodore Martin's spirited translation are the following:

The bard who strove of yore in tragic strains  
To win the goat, poor guerdon of his pains,  
Anon brought woodland satyrs in, and tried,  
If grave with gay might somehow be allied.  
For only by the lure of things like these,  
That by their novelty were sure to please,  
Could audiences be kept, who were, no doubt,  
By the religious service half tired out,  
And, being flushed with wine could scarce restrain  
The lawless humours of their mad-cap vein."<sup>9</sup>

The Italian critic Cinthio, also assuming that (this mixed emotional character of satire) is due to its retention of many features of its parent satyr-play, analyzes briefly the resultant aesthetic effects. He believes that they resemble those of tragicomedy, in that satire combines the emotional appeals of both tragedy and comedy. That is to say, satire moves the reader both to laughter and to pity and terror."

<sup>9</sup>Ll. 220-24:

"Carmine qui tragico vilem certavit ob hircum,  
mox etiam agrestis Satyros nudavit et asper  
incolumi gravitate jocum temptavit, eo quod  
illecebris erat et grata novitate morandus  
spectator, functusque sacris et potus et exlex."

<sup>10</sup>"La satira e imitazione di azione perfetta di dicevoli grandezza, composta al giocoso ed al grave con parlar soave, le membra della quale sono insieme al suo luogo per parte, e per parti devise, rappresentata a commovere gli animi a riso, el a convenevole terrore e compassione. . . .

(Sir Philip Sidney, in his *Apologie for Poetrie*, also conceives satire to hold a middle course between mirth and anxiety aroused by the tragic potentialities of the human passions. He bases his vindication of "the Satirick," not upon the strength of its moral imperative, but upon the ability of its playful spirit to "make a man laugh at folly, and at length ashamed, to laugh at himself." Thus, while playing about our midriff, satire is able to make us "feelee, howe many head-aches a passionate life bringeth us to."<sup>88</sup>)

Erasmus' use of the burlesque encomium or farcical panegyric, uttered by Folly herself in his *Moriae Encomium*, fortified the tradition that moral correction might be seasoned with mirth. He lightens with a smile the serious countenance expected of a satirist. Thus, in order to deride urbanely and wittily, Erasmus invented the wise fool. His "confessions" express a similar irony. These artful substitutions of semidramatic devices for the direct methods of classical formal satire revealed to later writers effective ways of (transferring satire to the stage in a form harmonious with the traditional gaiety of popular vernacular comedy.)

#### IV. *The Temper of English Formal Satire, 1593-1599*

The English writers of formal satire and epigram who expressed themselves with increasing fervor and boldness from 1593 to June 1,

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"Insieme giacosa e grave—la fa diversa dalla comedia e dalla tragedia, delle quali la prima e composta al piacevole, l'altra al grave. Ed essendo ella insieme partecipe della piacevolezza dell' una, e della gravita dell' altra, non e nè questa nè quella . . . A commovere terrore e compassione—la separa dalla comedia e la mostra in parte simile alla tragedia, e la fa dissimile alla tragedia il dire ad essa—conveneole. Perchè ciò mostra che non si movono nella satira gli affette con quella forza colla quale si movono nella tragedia. E così è un alcuna parte la satira simile alla comedia, in alcune alla tragedia, ed in alcune altre è dissimile dall' una e dall' altra." ("Lettera ovvero discorso di Giovambattista Geraldini sopra il comporre le satire atte alle scene," in *Scritti estetici biblioteca rara pubblicata da G. Daelli*, Vol. LIII [Milano, 1864], 134 et passim.)

<sup>88</sup>"The Satirick, who

*Omne vafer vitium, ridenti tangit amico.*

Who sportingly never leaveth, until hee make a man laugh at folly, and at length ashamed, to laugh at himself: which he cannot avoyd, without avoyding the follie. Who while

*Circum praecordia ludit,*

giveth us to feelee, howe many head-aches a passionate life bringeth us to. How when all is done,

*Est ulubris animus si nos non deficit aequus."*

(*Apologie for Poetrie*, sig. F3.)

1599, illustrate almost all the theories which have just been reviewed. They gave popular currency to the emancipated critical spirit and to the literary methods which Jonson and Marston later tried to preserve in their satiric plays.

Meres, in a famous passage in *Palladis Tamia*, lists the satirists whom he believes to be the English equivalents of Horace, Lucilius, Juvenal, Persius, and Lucullus: the author of *Piers Plowman*, Lodge, Hall, Marston, and Guilpin.<sup>30</sup> (These formal satirists assumed the role of reformer. They conceived their business to be not so much the derision of folly as the exposure of vice. They were dominated by Juvenal's *saeva indignatio* and their methods were deliberately severe. They worked themselves up into a state of vociferous indignation; their voices became strident and their lash played upon the prisoners of evil with cruel abandon. In exhibiting this savage temper these writers were professing faith in their literary descent from the wild, uncouth satyrs. "I am a Satyre," cries William Rankins, "savage is my sport."<sup>31</sup> The satirists also invoke the harsh spirit of Juvenal and of Persius. Their favorite symbols are the instruments of castigation and judicial torture: the scourge, the lash, the rack, the strappado. Hall has an even more horrific desire—to loose upon the wicked world "the snaky tresses of th'*Eumenides*."<sup>32</sup> In two passages he strikes the note which all of the contemporary writers of satire repeat:

Go daring Muse on with thy thanklesse taske,  
And do the ugly face of vice unmaske.<sup>33</sup>

The *Satyre* should be like the *Porcupine*,  
That shoots sharp quilles out in each angry line,  
And wounds the blushing cheeke, and fiery eye,  
Of him that heares, and readeth guiltily.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>30</sup>"As Horace, Lucilius, Juvenall, Persius & Lucullus are the best for Satyre among the Latines: so with us in the same faculty these are chiefe, *Piers Plowman*, Lodge, Hall of Imanuel Colledge in Cambridge; the Authour of *Pigmaliions Image*, and certaine Satyrs; the Author of *Skialetheia*." (Francis Meres, *Palladis Tamia* [London, 1598], p. 283<sup>v</sup>.)

<sup>31</sup>*Seaven Satyres, Applied to the weeke* (London: W. Fernbrand, 1598), No. 1 ("Contra Lunatistam"), sig. A5.

<sup>32</sup>Joseph Hall, *Virgidemiarum, Sixe Bookes. First three Bookes, Of Tooth-lesse Satyrs* (London: T. Creede, 1597); *The three last Bookes. Of byting Satyres* (London: R. Bradocke, 1598), Lib. 5, Satire 3, sig. F4.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.*, Lib. 1, Prologue, sig. Bv.

<sup>34</sup>*Ibid.*, Lib. 5, Satire 3, sig. F3<sup>v</sup>.

Guilpin exclaims that writers of satire and epigram

Are Antidotes to pestilentiall sinnes,  
They heale with lashing, seare luxuriousnes,  
They are Philosophicke true *Cantharides*  
To vanities dead flesh."

(Naturally men who cultivated that sort of spirit had no use for stoicism and even less for laughter. They thought that the true satirist should be ruled by melancholy or by that feeling of general and profound discontent, with the human situation, which the Elizabethans called "malcontent."<sup>48</sup> On occasions this spirit became contaminated with disgust or Timon-like cynicism.) Such melancholy or bitterness your true satirist could force to yield not tedium but a sober amusement, by converting the aversion caused by all sorts of mad conduct into derision of idiots and fools. Marston explains this salutary transformation in the following lines:

From out the sadness of my discontent,  
Hating my wonted jocund merriment  
(Only to give dull time a swifter wing),  
Thus scorning scorn, of idiot fools I sing."

But Marston is firm in his conviction that mirth should be rigorously excluded from a satirist's mind when he contemplates vice, and equally firm in his belief that the writer's excoriation of it should awaken no impulse toward laughter. Yet he does admit that when the satirist seeks merely to display and purge "humours"—a word which he uses in the sense of "social affectations"—then merriment and jesting are appropriate. (The distinction which Marston makes between the tone of satire intended to correct vice and that devoted to the control of social folly, and his attempt to establish

<sup>48</sup>Edward Guilpin, *Skialetheia. Or, A shadowe of Truth, in certaine Epigrams and Satyres* (London: J. Roberts, 1598), "Satyre Preludium," sig. Cv.

<sup>49</sup>For the meaning of this term, cf. O. J. Campbell, "Jaques," *The Huntington Library Bulletin*, No. 8 (Oct., 1935), pp. 71-79.

<sup>50</sup>*The Scourge of Villainy*, Satire 10, ll. 1-4 (*The Works of John Marston*, ed. A. H. Bullen [London, 1887], III, 367).

"Come, sporting Merriment,  
Cheek-dimpling Laughter, crown my very soul  
With jouissance, whilst mirthful jests control  
The gouty humours of these pride-swoll'n days,  
Which I do long until my pen displays."

(*The Scourge of Villainy*, Satire 11,  
ll. 6-10 [*Works*, III, 371].)

a different critical method for each, constitute an important pronouncement.) Possibly the distinction was suggested by Jonson's treatment of "humour" figures in *Every Man Out of His Humor*. But the Prologue, with the famous declaration that in his play he intends to "sport with humane follies, not with crimes," did not appear in the early quarto version of the comedy. In any case, the distinction is original with neither Jonson nor Marston. It appears in the work of some of the Italian critics of the sixteenth century. Castelvetro, for example, distinguishes between faults which are the result of folly and those due to evil, and between the attitudes to be taken toward them.<sup>49</sup>

Besides these formal satirists, an almost equally large group of writers of satiric epigrams flourished during the same decade. The most important were Sir John Davies, Sir John Harington, Thomas Bastard, and John Weever.<sup>50</sup> The publication of collections of epigrams by Robert Crowley in 1550 and John Heywood in 1562 marked the beginning of serious imitation of Martial in English literature.<sup>51</sup> Though their Latin master composed epigrams of many sorts, both of the English writers regarded the form as best suited to satire. And it is true that a majority of Martial's epigrams were satiric. He devoted much of his ridicule to the immorality prevalent in Rome during the turbulent and socially corrupt days of Nero and Domitian. He never became severe or hortatory, but was content to express amusement, cynical contempt, and, on rare occasions, disgust. Where Juvenal revealed intellectual penetration and moral fervor, mounting easily to exaggerated intensity and even violence of expression, Martial remained cool, urbane, and a little superficial. The difference between the attitudes of these two Romans represents the difference which Renaissance critics discerned between

<sup>49</sup>Cf. Ludovico Castelvetro, *Poetica d'Aristotle, vulgarizzata* (Basilia, 1576), p. 92, where he draws a sharp line between "turpitudine procedente de schiocchezza" and "turpitudine procedente de malvagità," and the ways in which each is to be corrected.

<sup>50</sup>The important works of these men are: Sir John Davies, *Epigrammes* (1590?); Sir John Harington, *Epigrams* (1615, 1618; but almost surely written between 1591 and 1599); Thomas Bastard, *Chrestoleros. Seven bookes of Epigrammes* (1598); John Weever, *Epigrammes in the oldest cut, and newest fashion* (1599).

<sup>51</sup>The best study of Martial's direct influence on the English epigram of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is T. K. Whipple, *Martial and the English Epigram, from Sir Thomas Wyatt to Ben Jonson* ("University of California Publications in Modern Philology," X [1920-25], 279-414).

the satire and the epigram. From Crowley to Guilpin<sup>81</sup> the latter form was considered simply a short satire, retaining some of the conciseness of an inscription and some of the ingenuity of a planned witticism. It certainly expressed a less severe moral tone and employed a less headlong method of attack than did satire. The writers of epigram thus appropriately dealt not with sins but with minor social absurdities. An epigram of Davies and one of Sir John Harington may serve to illustrate this fact. Clearly in imitation of Martial's account of a *bellus homo*<sup>82</sup> is Davies's poem, "Of a Gull":

Oft in my laughing rimes I name a gull,  
But this new terme will many questions breede;  
Therefore at first I will expresse at full  
who is a true and perfect gull indeede.

A gull is he who feares a velvet gowne,  
And when a wench is brave, dares not speake to her:  
A gull is he which traverseth the towne,  
And is for marriage knowne a common wooer.

A gull is he, which while he proudly weares  
A silver hilted rapier by his side,  
Indures the lies and knockes about the eares,  
whilst in his sheathe his sleeping sword doth bide.

A gull is he which weares good hansome cloathes,  
And stands in presence stroking up his haire,  
And filles up his unperfect speech with othes,  
But speakes not one wise word throughout the yeare:  
But to define a gull in termes precise,  
A gull is he which seemes, and is not wise.<sup>83</sup>

A more trivial epigram of Martial's<sup>84</sup> is expanded by Harington in his "Of Galla's goodly Periwigge":

You see the goodly hayre that *Galla* weares,  
'Tis certain her own hair, who would have thought it?  
She swears it is her owne: and true she swears:

<sup>81</sup>"The Satyre onely and Epigramatist,  
(Concise Epigrame, and sharpe Satyryst)."  
(Guilpin, *op. cit.*, sig. C.)

<sup>82</sup>*Epigrams* III. lxiii. This similarity has been pointed out by Whipple (*op. cit.*, p. 339).

<sup>83</sup>*Epigrammes and Elegies*. By J. D. and C. M. (Middleborough [1590?]), Epigram 2, sig. A3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>84</sup>Cf. Whipple, *op. cit.*, pp. 346-47.

For hard by Temple-barre last day she bought it.  
 So faire a haire, upon so foule a forehead,  
 Augments disgrace, and showes the grace is borrowed.<sup>66</sup>

The first poem is a portrait; the second, ridicule of a silly affectation. But each, despite the light, humorous tone, in the last line dismisses the subject with evident scorn.

Whether directed against vice or merely against folly, whether its spirit of correction be furious and headlong or merely indulgent and humorous, the satire and epigram were both asserted to be impersonal in their ridicule. Therefore no man innocent of the faults attacked need take offense at the harshness of the satirists. They reiterate their reassuring message in phrases that echo certain expressions of Horace which appear in the first satire of his second book. In a dialogue between the author and Trebatius, the latter warns his friend that his attacks on the parasite and the spendthrift frighten even those who are untouched by his derision of men guilty of such faults. They fear that their follies, whatever they are, will be the object of his next attack. Horace's answer is, "Why should innocent persons tremble at the punishment meted out to the guilty? When Lucilius began to expose secret foulness, did Laelius or Scipio Africanus or other innocent men take offense?"<sup>67</sup>

Donatus, in the passage already quoted, makes this idea familiar to the minds of all sixteenth-century schoolboys, insisting that not individuals but general faults were the proper objects of satire.<sup>68</sup> Hence satire, as Horace first said,<sup>69</sup> galls only those who deserve censure. But, unfortunately, almost every reader is subject to some vice or folly. For that reason satire never has been, and never will be, a popular form of literature.

<sup>66</sup>*The Most Elegant and Witty Epigrams of Sir John Harrington* (London, 1618), Bk. 2, No. 66, sig. F8v.

<sup>67</sup>" . . . . . quid? cum est Lucilius ausus  
 primus in hunc operis componere carmina morem,  
 detrahare et pellem, nitidus qua quisque per ora  
 cederet, introrsum turpis, num Laelius et qui  
 duxit ab oppressa meritum Karthagine nomen  
 ingenio offensi aut laeso doluere Metello  
 famosisque Lupo cooperto versibus?"

(*Satires* II. i. 62-68.)

<sup>68</sup>"Haec quae Satyra dicitur, eiusmodi fuit, ut . . . de vitij civium tamen sine ullo proprii nominis titulo carmen esset." (See n. 16, above.)

<sup>69</sup>*Satires* I. iv. 25-33.



These ideas became a commonplace of Renaissance criticism. The English satirists under discussion repeatedly enunciated them. For example, Lodge in *A fig for Momus* writes of his satires, "In them (under the names of certain Romaines) where I reprehend vice, I purposely wrong no man, but observe the lawes of that kind of poeme: If any repine thereat, I am sure he is guiltie, because he bewrayeth himselfe."<sup>98</sup> This assertion is repeated throughout the works of the whole school, with only slight variations.<sup>99</sup> The assertion that everyone who took exception to these writers' excoriation of any vice, presented thereby prima-facie evidence that he practiced it and so justly gave the general admonition a personal application, must have been infuriating to the critics of the movement. They were blithely stigmatized as persons made desperately uneasy by the public revelation of the vices to which they in their hearts knew themselves to be addicted.

#### V. *The Objects of Satirical Attack, 1593-1599*

The phases of the satiric movement which have already been discussed have revealed the literary traditions which controlled many of the practices of English writers. Some of the objects against which they directed their scorn and ridicule were also drawn from the pages of the Latin satirists. But much of their corrective zeal was stimulated by the contemporary social and economic abuses already briefly analyzed. Joseph Hall and Thomas Bastard attack most directly the evils due to the economic dislocations of their

<sup>98</sup>T[homas] L[odge], *A fig for Momus: Containing Pleasant varietie, included in Satyres, Eclogues, and Epistles* (London: printed for Clement Knight, 1595), sig. A3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>99</sup>E.g., Lodge, in the first satire in *A fig for Momus*, says that men hate to be even reminded of great and unusual deformities:

"Thus, though mens great deformities be knowne,  
They greeve to heare, and take them for their owne."

(Sig. B2.)

Sir John Davies asserts that the epigram is subject to the same law of anonymity. He is scornful of those ignorant enough to believe that the epigram can properly become an instrument of personal lampoon:

"But if thou find any so grosse and dull,  
That thinks I do to private taxing leane,  
Bid him go hang, for he is but a gull,  
And knowes not what an Epigramme doth meane:  
Which taxeth under a particular name,  
A generall vice that merites publike blame."

(*Epigrammes and Elegies*. By J. D. and C. M., Epigram 1, "Ad Musam," sig. A3.)

world. Bastard more than once reveals his understanding of the part that profitable raising of sheep had played in precipitating the agrarian crises. The following lines are typical:

Sheepe have eate up our medows & our downes,  
Our corne, our wood, whole villages & townes.<sup>61</sup>

Elsewhere he attacks with bitter indignation the men responsible for the inclosure of common lands:

I know where is a thiefe and long hath beene,  
Which spoyleth every place where he resortes.  
He steales away both subjectes from the Queene  
And men from his owne country of all sortes.  
Howses by three, and seaven, and ten he raseth,  
To make the common gleabe, his private land.<sup>62</sup>

Hall, particularly in the fourth and fifth books of *Virgidemiarum*, also attacks inclosure, rack-renting, and other widespread devices of landlords to compel their tenants to contribute more amply to their income. The heirs of Lolio, Hall foresees, will be guilty of various ingenious forms of oppression:

When perch't aloft to perfect their estate  
They racke their rents unto a treble rate;  
And hedge in all the neighbour common lands,  
And clogge their slavish tenant with commaunds.<sup>63</sup>

In another passage Hall describes the poverty and squalor of the poor tenant, who, nevertheless, in order to keep that little which he has, must haunt his landlord's hall, bearing flattery and gifts:

The smiling Land-Lord shows a sun-shine face,  
Faining that he will grant him further grace;  
And lear's like *Aesops* Foxe upon the Crane,  
Whose necke he craves for his *Chirurgian*;  
So lingers of the lease untill the last,  
What reckes he then of paynes or promise past?<sup>64</sup>

Nor does the miserly regrator and hoarder of grain escape Hall's militant scorn:

Ech Muck-worme will be rich with lawlesse gaine

<sup>61</sup>*Chrestoleros*, Lib. 4, Epigram 20, sig. G5v.

<sup>62</sup>*Ibid.*, Lib. 3, Epigram 22, sig. F1&v.

<sup>63</sup>*Virgidemiarum*, Lib. 4, Satire 2, sig. C2v.

<sup>64</sup>*Ibid.*, Lib. 5, Satire 1, sig. E5v.

Altho he smother up mowes of seeven yeares graine,  
And hang'd himsef when corn grows cheap againe.<sup>66</sup>

Such passages could be greatly multiplied. (They reveal the moral ardor with which the satirists attacked contemporary economic abuses and suggest that they adopted the tone of Juvenal because their own indignation was as hot as his.) Orthodox critical tradition met an urgent present need.

The threat which the beneficiaries of the new economic revolution made to the established social classes was also clearly seen by the English satirists. They derided both the upstart courtier and his imitator in the upper ranks of the prosperous merchants. (Attacks on the life of a courtier had, as we have suggested, become a convention of English literature by the end of the sixteenth century. They had been directed against the hypocrisy, falsehood, debauchery, and cruelty prevalent at court, and the resultant wretchedness of the situation of a professional suitor for royal favor.)<sup>67</sup> Ridicule of such general aspects of court life, when it appears in the work of the new formal satirists, should be regarded as traditional and of purely literary provenance.<sup>68</sup> But many of the attacks upon the courtiers' ways clearly refer to specific conditions prevailing at Queen Elizabeth's court. Donne, for example, describes the sycophant who knows

When the Queene frown'd, or smil'd, and he knowes what  
A subtle States-man may gather of that;  
He knowes who loves; whom; and who by poyson  
Hasts to an Offices reversion;  
He knowes who'hath sold his land, and now doth beg  
A licence, old iron, bootes, shooes, and egge-  
shells to transport; Shortly boyes shall not play  
At span-counter, or blow-point, but they pay  
Toll to some Courtier.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>66</sup>*Ibid.*, Lib. 4, Satire 6, sig. D7.

<sup>67</sup>Cf.: (1) John Skelton, *The Bowge of Court* (ca. 1520); (2) Sir David Lindsay, *The Testament, and Complaynt, of our Soverane Lordis Papyngo* (1530); (3) Alexander Barclay, *Eclogues*, I, ll. 825 ff.; (4) Sir Thomas Wyatt, "Satires," II, ll. 19 ff., 52 ff.

<sup>68</sup>Such, for example, is the fifth satire of John Donne. (*The Poems of John Donne*, ed. Herbert J. C. Grierson [Oxford, 1912], I, 168-71; cf. also Marston, Satire 2, ll. 87-106 [*Works*, III, 272-73].) Sycophancy was traditionally associated with an atmosphere of vice, as Donne asserts in these bitter lines:

" . . . Aretines pictures have made few chaste;  
No more can Princes courts, though there be few  
Better pictures of vice, teach me vertue." (*Poems*, I, 161.)

<sup>69</sup>*Poems*, I, 162.

Marston in *The Scourge of Villainy* shows that the courtier's eagerness to obtain monopolies is part of his desperate search for the money which he must have if he is to "jet it jollily" before the Queen.\*

(All of the writers derided the follies and pretensions of the upstart, with a moral fervor which today seems inappropriately intense. Their zeal is proof that they regarded these insignificant dandies as symptoms of social disintegration which it was their duty to check. Hence their exposure of the fantastic pretensions of the pushing new capitalist was an indirect assertion of the innate fineness of the ideals of the old landed aristocrats. These gentlemen they sought to recall from their avaricious bickering at court, which was not only blinding them to their hereditary social values but also weakening the bonds which until then had united them into a strong social class. Therefore, what now seems exaggerated concern with a negligible folly was to the satirists a menace of social revolution.)

Other objects attacked by the formal satirists are either less clearly of immediate social consequence or mere constituent elements of a literary tradition. (All of the seven deadly sins are assailed, and particularly those which had been singled out by Juvenal and Persius—hypocrisy, greed, gluttony, dishonesty of all sorts, and especially avarice and lust.<sup>70</sup> The new forms which avarice assumed during the sixteenth century were those most often excoriated; hence the satire of greed should be regarded as realistic and contemporary. How much of the persistent attack upon lust reflects an existing situation and how much represents conscientious imitation of earlier writers of epigram and satire, is difficult to say.) Martial devoted many of his poems to describing sexual sins and abnormalities, although in a tone that is seldom severe. Sometimes his verses merely give range to wanton desires, but more often they express a kind of taunting ridi-

\*“Aulus will leave begging monopolies  
When that, 'mong troops of gaudy butterflies,  
He is but able jet it jollily  
In piebald suits of proud court bravery.”

(Satire 4, ll. 83-86 [*Works*, III, 328].)

<sup>70</sup>These same sins had been exposed in many of the early prose tracts which have been hastily reviewed above—for example, in Stubbes, *Anatomy of Abuses*, Lodge, *An Alarum against Usurers*, and Nashe, *Pierce Penilesse*. The influence of the characters depicted in this literature of exposure, upon those appearing in the formal English satires, is a large subject, deserving special investigation. The ultimate literary sources of the figures attacked in the satires is not a matter of first importance to the present study.

cule. His favorite procedure is to use comment upon a sexual matter as careful preparation for a jest or a *jeu de mots*. For example, he refers to the Lesbian practices of a certain Bassa in order to say, "You have invented a monstrosity which may serve as an answer to the Theban riddle, 'How can a woman commit adultery without a man?'"<sup>76</sup> Such poems are probably no proof of Martial's own immorality or of his delight in brooding over obscenity. He tells us as much: "Lasciva est nobis pagina, vita proba."<sup>77</sup> In writing such stuff he was realistically satisfying the taste of the decadent Romans for whom his works were composed. He was merely giving them the "jocosa carmina" that they expected. *The Rime* of Francesco Berni, written between 1518 and 1536, and *The Dialogues* of Pietro Aretino, may have furnished the English satirists with another excuse, as good as the example of Martial, to concentrate their attention upon all forms of licentiousness. Yet they never adopted the careless delight of those men in the presence of sexual nastiness. Juvenal's fierce aversion to the phenomena seemed to them the proper attitude to take. (In particular, his violent rebuke of women's debauchery and lust fascinated them and fixed the tone of their treatment of this subject, which was harmonious with that expressed in the traditional medieval satire of women.)

In spite of all these literary precedents, (the preoccupation of all the members of this English school with the sins and perversions of sex is so marked that a critic must assume either that the satirists, in particular Marston, were pathologically attracted to the unsavory subject or that lustful practices constituted in their time the most dangerous enemy to social decency.) Today these attacks seem not so much warnings from evil as revelations of "what every old roué should know."

Joseph Hall sounded the summons to this massed attack by devoting his second satire to expressions of indignation against the treatment of lewd and obscene subjects in poetry.

Now is *Pernassus* turned to a stewes:  
And on Bay-stocks the wanton Myrtle grewes.

<sup>76</sup>This is a translation of the sense, not the literal meaning, of the following lines:  
"Commenta es dignum Thebano aenigmatæ monstrum,  
hic, ubi vir non est, ut sit adulterium."

(*Epigrams* I. xc. 8-9.)

<sup>77</sup>*Ibid.*, iv. 8.

*Cythéron* hill's become a Brothel-bed,  
And *Pyrene* sweet, turnd to a poysoned head  
Of cole-black puddle.<sup>73</sup>

In his ninth satire, which is a hostile criticism of the current interest of poets in such themes, he singles out for attack some nameless writer of bawdry, a graceless fellow who

Rymed in rules of Stewish ribaldry,  
Teaching experimentall Baudery.<sup>74</sup>

In one of his academical satires, Hall warns a certain Labeo to "write better" "or write none." Later in the poem it appears that he means "write cleanly, Labeo, or write nothing." Still farther along, he laments the recent publication of English translations of foreign erotica. He asks:

But who conjur'd this bawdie *Poggies* ghost,  
From out the *stewes* of his lewde home-bred coast:  
Or wicked *Rablais* dronken revellings.<sup>75</sup>

Guilpin attacks the same sort of poets, who

Are Panders unto lusts, and food to sinnes,  
Their whimpring Sonnets, puling Elegies  
Slaunder the Muses; make the world despise,  
Admired poesie, marre *Resolutions* ruffe,  
And melt true valour with lewd ballad stuffe.<sup>76</sup>

The various works constituting the body of the literature to which Hall refers are, for the most part, too well known to need enumeration here. The movement culminated in such famous erotic poems of the early 1590's as Marlowe's translation of Ovid's *Elegies*, his *Hero and Leander*, the *Epigrammes* of Sir John Davies, Chapman's *Ovids Banquet of Sence*, and Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. The principal source of the movement was Ovid's more licentious works, notably the *Ars Amatoria* and the *Amores*. This literature was written largely to pander to the taste of young profligates like the Earl of Southampton. Its popularity seems thus not to have been so much the *cause* as the *result* of an unhealthy interest in every sort of sex practice, normal and abnormal.

<sup>73</sup>*Virgidemiarum*, Lib. 1, Satire 2, sig. B3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>74</sup>*Ibid.*, Satire 9, sig. C3. It is probably impossible to discover just whom Hall meant. The description best fits the work of Pietro Aretino, which was widely known in England during the last two decades of the sixteenth century.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, Lib. 2, Satire 1, sig. C7<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>76</sup>*Skiaetheia*, sig. B8.

(Whatever the reasons for emphasis upon the exposure of licentiousness, the fact is incontrovertible.) The first satire in the fourth book of Hall's *Virgidemiarum* is ostensibly devoted to all the sins that fear exposure, or, as he puts it, to all who detest his open rhymes. His method in dragging them into the light will be very much like that of the Roman Fescennine satires described by Livy, which did not hesitate to be licentious themselves when occasion offered. This statement should prepare his readers for the attack upon libertines, both male and female, in Juvenal's furious temper, which occupies the entire latter half of the poem. The third satire of Marston's *The Scourge of Villainy*, with even more scandalous detail, lashes all sorts of strange forms of lust and licentiousness.

Moreover, satires ostensibly on other subjects betray almost an obsession of the writers' minds by an interest in matters of sex. Marston devotes his fourth satire, for example, to showing that slight faults are severely punished but "damned deeds" are praised. The evidence he presents is chiefly drawn from the licentiousness of the gods. Even many of the figures of speech with which these poets choose to decorate and illumine their themes are taken, as it were, from the stews. Donne's third satire is a striking instance of the curious preoccupation of the entire group. His subject is the futile search for true religion. Yet the metaphors which he employs to expose various reprehensible attitudes toward religion are largely drawn from the life of prostitutes. The following passage is typical:

. . . . . Carelesse Phrygius doth abhorre  
All," because all cannot be good, as one  
Knowing some women whores, dares marry none."

This somewhat repulsive characteristic of the formal satires needs no further illustration. It is patent to everyone who reads them.

Other reflections of the work of Juvenal and Persius appear in the details of the English poems which seem, at first sight, to be personal experiences of the authors. Even Hall's severe criticism of his fellow poets was almost surely suggested by similar attacks in the writings of his Latin masters. Persius, in his first satire, asserts the superiority of his work to that of Labeo, who presents a collection of "Bravos!" and "Beautifuls!" as evidence of literary excellence. Juvenal, in his first satire, similarly exalts his realistic achievements.

"I.e., "All religions."

"Satire 3, ll. 62-64 (*Poems*, I, 156).

They are, he maintains, vastly better than the compositions of poets who continue to tell tales of Hercules or to celebrate romantic wonders like the bellowing of the Minotaur. Such vaporings of an outmoded mythology, or even recapitulations of the adventures of Aeneas, have little to recommend them except that they are safe forms of poetic activity. They offend no one. But how can an author justify his absorption in such literature of escape in an age which is distorted into ugliness by all sorts of social enormities?

Hall frequently writes in just this Juvenalian vein. In his introduction to *Virgidemiarum*, called "His Defiance to Envy," he similarly strikes at the verbal extravagance and the chimerical imagination which characterized the poetry of Spenser and that of Ariosto, whose *Orlando Furioso* had just appeared in Sir John Harington's English translation (1591). Works like these "musty moral types," along with related forms of ambitious literary achievement, he renounces:

Rather had I, albee in carelesse rymes,  
Check the mis-ordred world, and lawlesse Tymes.

In the third satire of the first book he derides the "huf-cap terms, and thundring threats," of popular tragedy. A direct reference to "Turkish *Tamberlaine*" suggests that Hall regarded Marlowe as one of the worst purveyors of bombast. In the seventh satire of the same book, Hall ridicules the sonneteers; in the eighth, the poets who meddle with holy things; and in lines like

"Now good S. *Peter* weeps pure *Helicon*"

and

"Great *Salomon*, sings in the English Quire"

he refers specifically to Robert Southwell's *Saint Peter's Complaint* and to Markham's *Sion's Muse*. But Hall's most extended attack is upon Labeo, whose name, at least, he derived from Persius' first satire. His voluminous muse seems to have busied herself with English translations of Homer, Poggio, and Rabelais. The literary activity of no known contemporary of Hall's assumes just this catholic form. The English Labeo is best regarded as a type figure representing each and every one of the assiduous and tasteless Elizabethan translators. In fact, all of Hall's satires of literature are most sensibly viewed, not as expressions of personal animus against fellow authors or as documents in the history of literary quarrels, but as an extension and



application of an artistic method of two admired Latin models. This statement is equally true of the other satirists who participated in the movement. Personal allusions, when present, are fugitive, never carefully sustained or logically developed. To search for personal lampoons in the satires is to adopt the wrong approach toward them and can only result in distorting them and missing their larger significance.

A complete enumeration of the sins, excoriated in Roman satire, which reappear in the writings of the English satirists of the period would not serve the purposes of the present study. Alden,<sup>79</sup> in speaking of Hall's contributions, says, "Without exception (save in the case of alchemy and one or two others, excluded for obvious reasons) the vices and follies in these satires are those of classical satire." That is an exaggerated statement. As we have shown, many of the individuals ridiculed had no prototype in Latin satire. They represent social abuses and social follies created by economic phenomena of sixteenth-century England—a fact which enhances the value of the work of the English satirists. It establishes a nice balance, in their poems, between respect for literary tradition and concern with pressing social problems. It justifies their reiterated assertions that they have introduced into English literature, and domesticated there, a highly regarded type of classical literature.

#### *VI. The Methods of English Formal Satire, 1593-1599*

The artistic methods developed by these authors of formal satire are of importance for this study because of the strong influence which they exerted upon the construction of the comical satires. Imitators of Latin literature that they were, they found indirect and weak the early English way of classifying individuals for censure according to type or social function. They preferred to follow their classical models in presenting sin and folly as traits of clearly conceived individuals. Accordingly, they created semidramatic figures who at first bore a naïvely simple relation to the particular human frailty under pitiless observation, as indicated, in the work of Lodge for instance, by such a phrase as "Example be thou *Hepar*."<sup>80</sup> Figures serving such a purpose demanded three distinct services from their creators: they had to be introduced with much identifying detail,

<sup>79</sup>*Rise of Formal Satire*, p. 123.

<sup>80</sup>*A fig for Momus*, Satire 5, l. 35 (sig. Gv).

exhibited in characteristic action, and finally deflated and discomfited. If not forced to endure some sort of humiliation, they would not have served as salutary warnings, and their authors' intentions could not be pronounced unmistakably satiric.

These three stages in the exemplary career of folly or sin can be clearly discerned within the narrow compass of some of the epigrams of this school. Guilpin's poem, "Of Cornelius," may serve as a specimen. The first lines swiftly identify him:

See you him yonder, who sits o're the stage,  
With the Tobacco-pipe now at his mouth?  
It is *Cornelius* that brave gallant youth,  
Who is new printed to this fangled age.

The next lines describe his clothes and the manner in which he circulates among his acquaintances. These are his crowning absurdities. The last lines expose him as a counterfeit:

Yet this Sir *Bevis*, or the fayery Knight,  
Put up the lie because he durst not fight.<sup>81</sup>

Guilpin employed the same method in his satires, which are a mere sequence of expanded epigrams, each dealing with the addicts of a certain vice. For example, his fourth satire is a warning against jealousy. Among those afflicted with its ravages is Severus. His suspicions of his wife's virtue drive him to wild savagery. He beats her, swaggers among her maids, and ends by

. . . . . wrecking his teene  
Upon her ruffles and jewels, burning, tearing,  
Flinging and hurling, scolding, staring, swearing.<sup>82</sup>

This conduct is outrageous enough to pronounce verdict upon itself. But the author fulfills his obligations to his artistic form by devoting four lines to a heated assertion of the desperate character of Severus' guilt, in a succession of mordant similitudes:

Hee's as discreet, civill a gentleman,  
As *Harry Peasecod*, or a Bedlam man,  
A drunken captaine, or a ramping whore,  
Or swaggering blew-coate at an ale-house doore.<sup>83</sup>

A series of such portraits commonly unites to form these satires. The derided figures thus constitute a kind of procession of the

<sup>81</sup>*Skiaetheia*, Epigram 53, "Of Cornelius," sig. B<sub>4</sub>r&v.

<sup>82</sup>*Ibid.*, Satire 4, sig. D<sub>3</sub>v.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*

various slaves to passion who march through the poem. Guilpin's fifth satire, in which he reviews the creatures whom he meets as he walks in Paul's is a poem of this sort. Many of Marston's best satires are designed on a like model. In all of them the emotional climax is formed by the few lines of direct rebuke with which the author dismisses his characters. For example, after exhibiting a pseudo gallant who is all face and clothes, he drives him out of his poem in a burst of surprising severity:

Is this a man? Nay, an incarnate devil,  
That struts in vice and glorieth in evil.\*

Such treatments of the fools and knaves are character sketches of a sort, but they should be clearly differentiated from the technical "character" as invented by Theophrastus and widely developed by English writers of the seventeenth century. The method adopted by Theophrastus in all of his short character sketches is the same. It is, to quote Professor Edward C. Baldwin, "simplicity itself. It consists in defining a quality, and then proceeding to enumerate the things the type of man embodying that quality may be expected to do under given conditions."<sup>86</sup> The character is never strongly individualized. There is no description of his clothes, his appearance, or his peculiar attitudes. His actions, being various—different under different circumstances—are never set in a definitely visualized milieu. In all these ways the "character" was much more remote from the needs and methods of comic drama than the "satiric sketches," the prototype of which is to be found not in Theophrastus but in Martial.<sup>87</sup>

\**The Scourge of Villainy*, Satire 7, ll. 26-27 (*Works*, III, 345).

<sup>86</sup>Edward Chauncey Baldwin, "The Relation of the English 'Character' to Its Greek Prototype," *PMLA*, XVIII (N.S., XI), 415.

<sup>87</sup>Martial seldom writes an epigram containing the three essential characteristics of the best satiric portrait: (1) a description of the appearance and actions of the individual satirized; (2) the presentation of the character in dramatic terms; and (3) his scornful dismissal in the last line or two of the epigram. However, a few meet all these requirements. An examination of poems LXII and LXIII in Book III of the *Epigrams* will illustrate the points at issue. Epigram LXII satirizes a foolish spendthrift, Quintus, by describing his purchases. For example, Martial cries, "You buy slave boys for a hundred thousand, and often two hundred thousand, sesterces apiece," etc. (l. 1: "Centenis quod emis pueros et saepe ducentis"). At the end of the poem, Martial deflates the fellow in two lines: "Do you think, Quintus, that the purchase of these things is an indication of a large intelligence? You are mistaken. These are the things that a petty mind wishes to buy" ("Haec animo credis magno te, Quinte, parare? / falleris: haec animus, Quinte, pusillus emit"). Epigram LXIII is a more complete proto-

The English satires often display other dramatic characteristics than those to be found in this portrait. Most of them are adaptations of familiar aspects of Latin satire. Horace, in particular, was fond of dialogues and presented many human encounters in which he indicated clearly the action and even the gestures of the participants. His painful experience with the bore is the best-known of these semidramatic works. His English disciples availed themselves of similar devices. John Donne's first satire is but another version of Horace's encounter. A motley humourist meets the poet and insists on walking along the street in his company. The fantastic actions of the foolish fellow, as he passes different persons, are presented in a quasi-dramatic way, as the following lines will show:

Now leaps he upright, Joggs me, & cryes, Do you see  
Yonder well favoured youth? Which? Oh, 'tis hee  
That dances so divinely; Oh, said I,  
Stand still, must you dance here for company?  
Hee droopt, wee went."<sup>7</sup>

Such a passage contains dialogue and clearly indicated action, as does all the rest of the poem. The bore leaves the poet only when he spies his Love in a window and flings away

"Violently ravish'd to his lechery."<sup>8</sup>

In the latter part of Donne's fourth satire an even more effective dramatic scene is presented. The poet sees in a dream a crowd of suitors at court. The setting is the Presence Chamber, the time is "ten a clock and past." At this hour to the court come

. . . . . All whom the Mues,  
Baloune, Tennis, Dyet, or the stewes,  
Had all the morning held."<sup>9</sup>

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type for the satiric portrait, in that the description of the fool is more clearly dramatic in method. The poem presents the actions of Cotilus, a typical "bellus homo" or fop. He spends his time dallying with his curls, humming tunes which have been imported into Rome from the Nile or the Gades, and waving his arms in time with various musical measures. Or he lolls among the ladies, forever whispering into the ear of one of them. He runs from one party to another, purveying such gossip as who is in love with whom, or such information as the long pedigree of a famous race horse of the day. Martial ends Cotilus' little hour of stage strut with these scornful lines: "Is this, this thing a fop, Cotilus? Then is a fop, Cotilus, a very thrashy thing" ("Quid narras? hoc est, hoc est homo, Cotile, bellus? / res pertriciosa est, Cotile, bellus homo"). In such an epigram the English satirists could have found a model for all the essential elements of their portraits.

<sup>7</sup>Satire 1, ll. 83-87 (*Poems*, I, 148).

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, l. 108.

<sup>9</sup>Satire 4, ll. 175-77 (*Poems*, I, 165).

These intellectual derelicts are followed by the ladies, whom the men accost. The two groups at once fall to praising each other—the men the women's beauty, the women the men's wit. Upon the stage thus set enters a typical courtier. He has stopped at the threshold to put his clothes in order and to indulge in elaborate furbishing and prinking. Then

. . . . . a Lady which owes  
Him not so much as good will, he arrests,  
And unto her protests protests protests.<sup>80</sup>

While these two ceremoniously plague each other in this way, Glorius enters. He is a fellow who affects in all his manners a rough carelessness. Hence he rushes in as if to shout an alarm, caring not whose cloak his spurs tear or whom he spits upon.

. . . . . He keeps all in awe;  
Jeasts like a licenc'd foole, commands like law.<sup>81</sup>

As the boor begins to dominate the assembly, the poet leaves the Presence by passing through the great chamber, which is hung with tapestry depicting the seven deadly sins. He wonders why.

Here is an ensemble scene composed with the adroitness of a skilled dramatist and an experienced stage manager. The characters who emerge as the spawn of the trifling atmosphere generated by the throng are depicted with just those details indispensable for an actor who might play the part. For example, instead of describing at length the appearance or the costume of Macrine, Donne indicates definitely what the fellow should do with his clothes, what posture he should assume at his entrance, what lady he should first accost, and what kind of remark he should make to her.

While beholding the dramas played out by these satirically conceived and vividly drawn figures—in fact, while responding to each of the literary devices employed by these poets—the reader is continually aware that the admonitory author is at hand. We see every character through his eyes; the illustrative anecdotes are all his; he intrudes, at frequent intervals, with angry rebuke. He is at once detective, prosecutor, and judge. The evils exposed are those which arouse his moral aversion and his derision, and the correction is the product of his invention.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 210-12.

<sup>81</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 227-28.

Practically all of the characteristics of English formal satire which have been enumerated in this chapter reappear in the comical satires which took over their office. The authors of these plays derided the same social enormities and follies; they assailed them in the same temper; and, in striving for exposure, discomfiture, and reform, they translated many of the details of method of the older form into the vernacular of the stage and its accessories. In fact, one may fairly say that the distinguishing features of formal satire, transferred to comical satire, largely determined its peculiar dramatic character.

## CHAPTER III

### *Every Man Out of His Humor*

One of the reasons why Jonson undertook the composition of *Every Man Out of His Humor* was in order to nullify the recent prohibition of satire. He determined that he would incorporate within this play as many of the distinguishing characteristics of the suppressed literary art as he could. That seems to be the key to an understanding of most of the unusual features of the comedy. But Jonson's respect for critical authority and tradition was so strong that he would scarcely have embarked upon the enterprise unless he had been able to discover classical warrant for it. Such sanction he found in Renaissance theories of *vetus comoedia* and its relation to *satyra* and Latin satire. They assured him that in composing a comical satire he was returning lost social functions to the place of their origin, the stage, and revivifying moribund dramatic values.

In planning his new drama, therefore, he sought guidance, sometimes in the ample literature of criticism from the age of the ancients to his own day, sometimes in the practice of his immediate predecessors and contemporaries. For his familiarity with current satires and their classical models taught him that an author of a dramatic substitute for satire had to follow a well-established artistic routine. He was obliged to devise a program of ridicule, admonition, and correction, planned in all its details and systematically carried to completion. After presenting in satiric portraits the characters he chose to deride, he had to force them to assume forms of exaggeration familiar to caricature, to pursue them with hostile comment, and either to dramatize their reformation or merely scornfully to eject them from the play, still cherishing their folly—futile and defiant. Most important of all, Jonson would realize that he had to invent figures who could naturally assume the important functions of derision and censure exercised by the authors of formal satires. Without the presence of a character to establish ethical and social standards and to mark deviations from them, the intent of the author's ridicule and correction would remain obscure. As will presently appear, Jonson received valuable suggestions for his depiction

of this *raisonneur* from a clever application of some familiar theories enunciated by Plato and Aristotle.

This cursory survey of the principles which Jonson would have held authoritative makes it probable that he would not have considered as satire a play containing merely incidental derision of vice or folly, or one permeated by expansive and gay laughter at human absurdity. Therefore it is a mistake to regard *Every Man in His Humor* as the same kind of comedy as his second "humour" play. The essential likeness between the two lies in the fact that in them Jonson adapts an identical pseudoscientific conception of personality to the establishment and differentiation of character types. But there are very important differences between the two dramas, in tone and in the principles governing their construction.

It would be idle to deny that *Every Man in His Humor* had escaped the influence of the spirit that dominated English literature when the play was written. The principal business of the comedy is derision, and many of the figures ridiculed are representatives of social follies abroad in contemporary London. But the plot is conventionally Plautine and Italianate. The action is invented and controlled by a resourceful servant Musco, whose methods are the timeworn tricks of disguise and deceit, devised in order to help his young master win the lady of his choice. Other figures, such as the tyrannical father and the loutish Cob, are conventions of all Renaissance comedy. Thorello [Kitley], an embodiment of jealousy, and Guillianio [Downe-right], of irascibility or anger, belong to a dramatic tradition reaching back to the moralities and bear no essential relationship to any of the recurrent figures of formal satire.

Some of the characters in *Every Man in His Humor* did represent the types of affected gallantry and singularity which the formal satirists were attacking at the same time, and they reappear in *Every Man Out of His Humor*. Baskervill has found resemblances, or at least relationships, almost everywhere, between characters of the two plays.<sup>1</sup> But, except in the development of Matheo [Matthew] into Brisk and the splitting of the country gull Stephano [Stephen] into two clearly individualized louts, Fungoso and Sogliardo, the differences between the two plays in this respect are greater than the likenesses. The characters in the second play are more highly indi-

<sup>1</sup>Baskervill, *English Elements in Jonson's Early Comedy*, p. 145.



vidualized, less personifications of type,<sup>8</sup> and more definitely in the traditions of contemporary satire.

The display and correction of the humours of the *dramatis personae* in *Every Man in His Humor* are accomplished by methods unlike those of satire. Even the characters representing the newer traditions of derision are provided with neither an expositor nor a commentator, to stimulate, interpret, and expose their follies. Simple encounters with each other, and the presence of a pair of authentic gentlemen to serve as standards by which to measure the ineptitude of the would-be's, furnish all the opportunities for display that the comedy needs. The final deflation and correction of the figures ridiculed are brought about in a manner quite different from that of epigram and satire. The agent of reformation is Doctor Clement. He is a justice in motley, a mad wag, whose critical spirit is as different from that of Hall or Marston as can possibly be imagined. He utters no salutary rebuke, no words of withering scorn. Instead, at the end of the play, he establishes an atmosphere of gaiety; in which the "humour" characters, recognizing their follies as incongruous with the expansive spirit that he has generated, give them up. The merry doctor promises an apotheosis of this spirit, in an evening of revelry to take place at his house. Such Dionysiac conviviality is not the atmosphere in which a man can be impressively made to renounce his sins or humbly to submit to purgation of his folly. The comedy in all these ways remains remote from the temper and methods of formal satire.

The first problem which Jonson had to solve, in order to make *Every Man Out of His Humor* a recognizable dramatic equivalent of formal satire, was the invention of an effective representative of the ubiquitous author in the earlier form. He had to fill the indispensable post of commentator. Similar figures in the morality plays, or the spokesmen or presenters in the masques, might serve as models for Mitis and Cordatus, but none of them was suited to the half-dramatic and half-critical services which were required. Asper could represent Jonson himself in the role of ideal castigator of both follies and sins. His severity, like that of his creator, was an expression of moral indignation. But Jonson clearly believed that not until Asper had

<sup>8</sup>Baskervill (*ibid.*) remarks this difference, but some of its significance is missed in the phrasing of his sentence: "The types are rather more specific . . . representative of more definite follies."

become transformed into Macilente could he discharge the complex duties assumed by the writers of satire. And even then he needed the aid of Carlo Buffone.

The invention of these two characters, who were essential for the success of Jonson's new dramatic project, was suggested to him by some of the cardinal principles of comic theory as it had been preserved in the Aristotelian tradition. In an interesting passage in the *Tractatus Coislinianus*, its author classifies the characters whom he considers proper for comedy. They are, he says, "(1) the buffoonish, (2) the ironical, and (3) those of the impostors." All of the characters in *Every Man Out of His Humor* belong in one of these three categories. All except Carlo and Macilente are impostors, in that they are pretending to be what they really are not. The former will prove to be the typical buffoon of Renaissance critical tradition; Macilente is an ironical character in the sense in which the Greeks used the term. To them an ironic man was one who represented himself as worse in some way than he actually was. Socrates, with his provocative affectation of ignorance, was the most famous of such persons. In Jonson's play Macilente is in fact the sturdy moral teacher, Asper; but, for the purposes of the plot, he has assumed the role of a man dominated by the passion of envy. This, he apparently believes, is the emotion most likely to stimulate effective criticism of vice and folly. That Jonson was able to accommodate such orthodox dramatis personae of comedy to the purposes of his dramatic satire is a tribute to his literary skill. Asper-Macilente, then, and, to a lesser degree, Buffone, in a peculiar negative way, divide between them the duties of the author in formal satire. But Jonson has succeeded in involving both of them in the action to such a degree as to prevent their seeming to be mere commentators.

Asper-Macilente, as a type, is obviously an agent of didactic reflection, an ethical expositor. As long as he remains Asper, his mood is like that of the formal satirists of the 1590's. In the prologue he exhibits their exclamatory distress over the sins of the world and an almost frantic zeal to flagellate the follies of the time with his famous "whip of steele." Mitis, clearly thinking of the disaster that had recently overtaken the works of the formal satirists, warns Asper

<sup>1</sup>Lane Cooper, *An Aristotelian Theory of Comedy, with an Adaptation of the Poetics and a Translation of the 'Tractatus Coislinianus'* (New York, 1922), p. 226.

of his danger in thus seeking to re-express the spirit and intention of these discredited authors:

Asper (I urge it as your friend) take heed,  
The daies are dangerous, full of exception,  
And men are growne impatient of reproofe.<sup>4</sup>

To this warning Asper gives the answer which we have seen was conventional with the satirists: only those guilty of the vices and follies which the action exposes will object; good men and virtuous spirits that loathe their vices will applaud his work. Asper's defiant confidence in the salutary nature of his correction, his asserted freedom from what the satirists called "private taxing," his boldness and recklessness of consequences, all show him to be a reincarnation of the spirit of the recently defunct formal satire.<sup>5</sup> The fact that no such figure appeared in *Every Man in His Humor* suggests that Asper was a conscious innovation—the most obvious of Jonson's calculated efforts to domesticate in his comedy all that was essential to the spirit and form of the related literary genre.

Asper's famous disquisition on the proper use of the word *humour* need not be reviewed here. But it is important to remark that, even though Jonson were making a radical change in the structure of comedy, he knew that he could still effectively employ the psychological analysis and classification of character then greatly in vogue. Though Jonson scores those who describe a social foible or affectation as a "humour," he announces that these social apes are precisely what he intends to deride in the play. In presenting his program, significantly he uses the three terms that the satirists had most often employed, for a decade, to describe their methods: *scourge*, *mirror*, and *anatomize*.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup>*The Comickall Satyre of Every Man Out of His Humor* (London: Holme, 1600), sig. B<sub>3</sub>.

<sup>5</sup>Baskervill (*op. cit.*, p. 152) gives expression to approximately the same idea, saying, "As a scourger Asper shows the harsh impatience with evil and a bold defiance of evil-doers that make him the typical satirist of the age."

"Well I will scourge these apes,  
And to these courteous eies oppose a mirror  
As large as is the stage whereon we act,  
Where they shall see the times deformitie,  
Anatomiz'd in every Nerve and sinew,  
With constant courage, and contempt of feare."

(Sigs. B<sub>2v</sub>-B<sub>3</sub>; quoted in this connection by Baskervill [*op. cit.*, p. 151].)

He then appoints Mitis and Cordatus to sit as censors of the conduct of the action and as interpreters of its meaning. These critics, we shall see, exercised their functions in such a way as to show that Jonson regarded this play as an experiment with a new dramatic form or with the adaptation of an old form to new uses. Having thus fulfilled the duties of a presenter, Asper announces that he will "turne an Actor, and a Humorist." He will, in fact, appear in the comedy as Macilente (the emaciated one), a character wholly dominated by envy.

In believing envy to be the emotion most competent to effect the exposure and derision of human folly, Jonson is adopting a psychological theory at least as old as Plato. Socrates expresses this view in the *Philebus*. He there develops the idea that envy is that mixed feeling of pain and pleasure which opens a critic's eye to ridiculous aspects of human conduct and sharpens his pen when displaying them. The ridiculous, Socrates continues, is a vicious form of certain habits and is to be sharply distinguished from the ludicrous, which can be recognized without the penetration stimulated by any such intense emotion. But envy added to laughter just that sort of bitterness which rendered it satiric.<sup>7</sup>

Aristotle, from whose works Renaissance psychologists derived many of their principles, did not directly assert that the satiric spirit is born and fostered in envy. However, his conception of the operations of this emotion made it seem an appropriate stimulus to the activities which Jonson required of Macilente in his play. Aristotle asserts that envy and indignation have much in common, particularly in that each emotion arises solely on one's neighbor's account.<sup>8</sup> Hence, these two emotions can be dispelled only through disaster to the fortunes of envied persons. The envious man, if he is wise, will therefore devote his activities to accomplishing the discomfiture of those whom he envies.<sup>9</sup> These sentences give the *raison d'être* for Macilente's plans and dramatic enterprises. Aristotle, moreover, enunciates principles which justified Macilente and all the satirists of the period in their constant preoccupation with the upstart. He

<sup>7</sup>*Philebus* 48-50 (*Dialogues of Plato*, tr. Jowett, III, 199-201).

<sup>8</sup>*Works of Aristotle*, ed. Ross, XI (Oxford, 1924): *Rhetorica* ii. 9 (§1387\*).

<sup>9</sup>*Ibid.*, ii. 10 (§1388\*). My sentence is based on such phrases as, "The states of mind in which they [envious people] feel pain are those under which they will feel pleasure in the contrary things," etc.

writes: "What is long established seems akin to what exists by nature; and therefore we feel more indignation at those possessing a given good if they have . . . only just got it . . . The newly rich give more offence than those whose wealth is of long standing and inherited."<sup>10</sup>

Since all of Macilente's comment and action is authoritative expression of his ruling emotion of envy, his temperament and attitudes are quite different from those of such "humorous" melancholiacs as Dowsecer, in Chapman's *An Humorous dayes Myrth*, and as Jaques—the figures with whom Baskervill compares Macilente. To be sure, Macilente, like them, associates with envy a propensity toward reflection, and the emotion thus intellectualized produces a philosophically justified scorn of men and manners. But in Jaques this attitude is partly affectation and partly an expression of somewhat pathological emotion. In Macilente it is not contempt of every sort of human employment, but only of the behavior of those whom he envies, and hence a normal manifestation of a normal emotion.<sup>11</sup>

The physical peculiarities of Macilente, the stage figure, are, as Baskervill shows, conventional in English allegorical treatments of Envy, at least from the time of *Piers Plowman*, and the exhibitions of his malice have a like source. The formal satirists, particularly Hall, assigned to Envy a similarly creative role in the construction of their works. The following lines from the Prologue to the first book of *Virgidemiarum* are typical:

Envy wayts on my backe, Truth on my side:  
 Envy will be my Page, and Truth my Guide.  
 Envy the margent holds, and Truth the line:  
 Truth doth approve, but Envy doth repine.<sup>12</sup>

Truth and Envy are therefore two equally authoritative deities who preside over his work. In the Prologue to his second book, he asserts that the envy in which satire is generated is not an expression of contempt and malice but of nemesis—that is, of the spirit which

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, ii. 9 (§1387\*).

<sup>11</sup>These are the figures with whom Baskervill (*op. cit.*, pp. 163-64) compares Macilente. Baskervill insists that Macilente is a malcontent, representing the satirists' characteristic attitude: "The satirist's affected scorn of men and manners is, of course, the mainspring of the malcontent, and he arose with satire" (pp. 162-63). The value of "malcontent" as a critical term is doubtful. (Cf. my article, "Jaques," in *The Huntington Library Bulletin*, No 8 [Oct., 1935], pp. 71-102.) To speak of "the humour of malcontent," as Baskervill does (p. 159), is a mistake. The phrase would have been nonsense to an Elizabethan.

<sup>12</sup>Sig. B.

animates the moral laws of the universe." Allegory and formal satire had thus combined to make the nature and the actions of Macilente easy for an Elizabethan audience to understand. Neither the audience nor the critics would mistake him for Ben Jonson's equivalent of Jaques.<sup>14</sup>

They would expect his utterances to be of two sorts. Since the objective expression of subjective envy is scorn, Macilente would on occasions indulge in vituperation. When his meditative melancholy predominated, he would give voice to a kind of philosophical pessimism. His comments of the first kind are much too extravagant to be accepted as the expression of Jonson's moral intelligence. His comments on Sordido's avarice are sheer execration.<sup>15</sup> He begins with

<sup>14</sup>Certain lines of his Prologue are an answer to the question which Hall poses, in effect as follows: "What has urged the corrective spirit of Diogenes to disappear?" The lines are these:

"Envie belike incites his pining hart,  
And bids it sate it selfe with others smart.  
Nay, no despight: but angrie *Nemesis*,  
Whose scourge doth follow all that done amisse."

(Sig. C5r&v.)

It is indicative of the prevalence of the notion that satire is partly the child of Envy, that both Marston (in ll. 15-16 of "To Detraction," prefixed to *The Scourge of Villainy*) and Hall (in his *Virgidemiarum*) defy and abjure Envy. And Hall expatiates on the significance of this attitude, in his charge to the second collection of satires, called "byting Satyres." The important lines are the following:

"Ye luck-lesse Rymes, whom not unkindly spighte  
Begot long since of Truth and holy rage,

When I am dead and rotten in the dust,  
Then gin to live, and leave when others lust.

"For when I dye shall Envie die with mee  
And lye deepe smothered with my Marble-stone,  
Which while I live cannot be done to dye."

That is, Envy and not "unkindly spighte" has initiated these satires. Envy has also vitiated the judgment of his contemporaries. At his death his personal feeling, and that of his detractors, too, will die. Then, and only then, will the true ethical and social cogency of his satires be recognized.

<sup>15</sup>The notion that envy was an important constituent emotion of the impulse to the composition of satire became a commonplace of critics hostile to the new dramatic form. One of the additions made to *Mucedorus* (1598) for the text of the quarto of 1610 was a dialogue, at the end of the play, between Envie and Comedie, in which the former threatens to overthrow his shallow antagonist by rearing a hungry Negro cannibal to write a comedy containing "darke sentences, / Pleasing to factious braines." The date of this revival is difficult to fix. E. K. Chambers (*The Elizabethan Stage* [Oxford, 1923], IV, 35) suggests Feb. 3, 1611. If that is correct, the ideas expressed in the dialogue are those of a critic passing judgment on satiric comedy near the close of its career.

<sup>14</sup>I, iii, sig. D2v.

"O here's a pretious filthy damned rogue,"  
and ends with

"A plague consume thee and thy house."

His severity is justified, because avarice is a sin and not a folly, and only the latter, we have seen, was considered a fit subject for mirth. Sordido's humour was not ludicrous, but merely detestable. Consequently it is related to the vices of formal satire much more than to the follies proper to comedy. But Cordatus is at pains to show that Macilente's emotion, even when aroused by Sordido, is not hatred but envy. "There was," he says, "subject for his envie in *Sordido*; his wealth."<sup>18</sup> For this reason it would have been quite improper for Macilente to reprove Sordido's wretchedness directly, inasmuch as actual reprehension is the product of hatred, not of envy. The complete absence of speeches of downright correction in *Every Man Out of His Humor* marks an important difference between the authors of the formal satires and Jonson's earliest personal representatives among his *dramatis personae*—Buffone and Macilente.

Macilente's ridicule of the fools is also provoked by envy, but it seldom takes the form of headlong attack. Because he envies the doting Deliro the possession of his wife Fallace, he can see the very bottom of the fellow's uxorious folly and stimulate him to exaggerate and underscore it. Then envy, reinforced by contempt, evokes derision and establishes the attitude which the author wishes the audience to take toward Deliro. Thus Macilente performs the office of expositor and forces the fools to expose themselves. He can thereby avoid extended reprobation or measured moral reproof and remain secure in his dramatic role. Even expressions of ostensibly general truths about life prove to be, not the product of calm philosophical reflection, but of his envy.<sup>19</sup> To detect, in broad comment of that

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, sig. D4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>19</sup>The following diatribe against the favorable influence which fine clothes exert on a man's career at court seems at first the product of calm, disinterested observation:

"Whereas let him be poore and meanely clad,  
Though ne're so richly parted; you shall have  
A fellow (that knowes nothing but his Beefe  
Or how to rince his clammie guts in beere)  
Will take him by the shoulders or the throte,  
And kicke him downe the staires. Such is the state  
Of vertue in bad Cloths, ha, ha, ha, ha."

But further on in the speech Macilente betrays the envy that has provoked it:  
"How long should I be ere I should put off

sort, revelation of an intellect like Hamlet's, is to misunderstand both the source of Macilente's dissatisfaction with his fellows and the temper of his utterances.

In the latter part of *Every Man Out of His Humor* Macilente becomes a wit-intriguer. He invents the plots which lure the humorous figures to supreme exhibitions of their follies. At such moments they behold as in a mirror the distortion into which their besetting sins have forced their countenances. Macilente's plotting, the active expression of his envy, has so violently assailed their affectations that they are defeated and forced to surrender. Such an explanation of Macilente's program is obligingly offered by Cordatus.<sup>18</sup>

When the characters have been purged of their folly and acknowledge that the results of their various affectations have been evil, Macilente's mood completely changes. In divesting the objects of his envy of their desirable possessions, he has successfully followed the course suggested by Aristotle and completely rid himself of his predominant humour. Its sudden disappearance he explains as follows:

My Humor (like a flame) no longer lasts  
Than it hath stuffe to feed it, and their vertue,  
Being now rak't up in embers of their Follie,  
Affords no ampler Subject to my Spirit.<sup>19</sup>

Then his actor's disguise falls from him; and, though he has not time to shift costumes, he begs the audience to imagine that the change has been made and that he is again the simpler Asper, in which character he speaks the epilogue.<sup>20</sup>

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To my Lord *Chancelors* tombe, or the *Shrives* posts?  
By heaven (I thinke) a thousand thousand yeare."

(III, iii, sig. K3v.)

<sup>18</sup>"O hee's a fellow of a strange Nature. Now do's hee (in this calme of his Humor) plot and store up a world of malicious thoughts in his braine, till he is so full with 'hem, that you shall see the very Torrent of his Envie breake forth, and against the course of all their affections oppose it selfe so violently, that you will almost have wonder to thinke how 'tis possible the current of their Dispositions shall receive so quicke and strong an alteration." (Sig. Ov.)

<sup>19</sup>Sig. R2. The folio version of the last three lines is:

"Then it hath stuffe to feed it, and their folly,  
Being now rak't up in their repentant ashes,  
Affords no ampler subject to my spleene."

These lines make clearer the relation of the follies to Macilente's envy. But it introduces a note inharmonious with the spirit and method of this satire, with the idea of repentance.

<sup>20</sup>At its first presentation, the play had a different conclusion. Macilente was not purged of his envy through reform of the creatures who awakened it. Instead, he is



The other agent of satire is Carlo Buffone. Baskervill describes him appropriately as "a buffoon, a low jester, who confounds with similes."<sup>21</sup> His ridicule is of the basest sort—unrestrained detraction, animated by none of the reformatory zeal inherent in the indignation of Asper or the envy of Macilente. Cordatus informs the audience<sup>22</sup> that Carlo is no "humour" figure, but endowed with a wholly perverted nature, a "fiend-like disposition." Baskervill discovers a number of prototypes of this figure in allegorical representations of Backbiter and Derision.<sup>23</sup> However, the basic conception of Buffone owes more to discussions of the nature of mirth and of satire in the works of classical rhetoricians and their disciples in the Renaissance.

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confronted by his sovereign the Queen, and "the verie wonder of her *Presence* strikes him to the earth dumbe, and astonisht," and purges him of his passion, as he explains:

"So in the ample and unmeasur'd Flood  
Of her *Perfections*, are my *Passions* drown'd:  
And I have now a *Spirit* as sweet and cleere,  
As the most rarefi'd and subtile Aire."

(Sig. R<sub>3</sub><sup>v</sup>.)

But many, says Jonson, "seem'd not to relish it; and therefore 'twas since alter'd." And the revised conclusion, published also in the quartos, emphasizes the novel form which the comedy has taken, the possibly limited appeal of this intellectual art, and the satiric intention of the entire comedy:

"Kind *Patrons* of our sports (you that can judge,  
And with discerning thoughts measure the pace  
Of our strange Muse in this her *Maze* of Humor,

We know (and we are pleas'd to know so much)  
The Cates that you have tasted were not season'd  
For every vulgar Pallat, but prepar'd  
To banket pure and apprehensive eares:  
Let then their Voices speake for our desert;  
Be their *Applause* the Trumpet to proclaime  
Defiance to rebelling Ignorance,  
And the greene spirits of some tainted Few,  
That (spight of pitie) betray themselves  
To Scorne and Laughter; . . . . .

. . . . . Such as these  
We pawne 'hem to your *censure*, till Time, Wit,  
Or Observation, set some stronger seale  
Of *judgement* on their judgements."

(Sig. R<sub>2</sub><sup>r&v</sup>.)

Here is a clear statement of Jonson's intention to arouse the scornful laughter of the judicious, that he may use it as an agent for reform of the ignorant and those tainted with either folly or sin.

<sup>21</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 170.

<sup>22</sup>I, iii, sig. D<sub>4</sub><sup>v</sup>.

<sup>23</sup>*Op. cit.*, pp. 171-72.

Aristotle describes a buffoon as follows:

Those who carry humour to excess are thought to be vulgar buffoons [*φορτικοί βωμολόχοι*], striving after humour at all costs, and aiming rather at raising a laugh than at saying what is becoming and at avoiding pain to the object of their fun; . . . the well-bred man's jesting differs from that of a vulgar man, and the joking of an educated man from that of an uneducated. One may see this even from the old and the new comedies; to the authors of the former indecency of language [the Greek is *αισχρολογία*, which means literally "causing shame," and here, either abusive or obscene language] was amusing, to those of the latter innuendo [*ὑπόνοια*] is more so.<sup>24</sup>

Cicero also warns an orator against becoming a *sannio* (a word derived from *sanna*, meaning a grimace)—that is, against becoming a clownish buffoon.<sup>25</sup>

The form which reprehension of the buffoon took in the English critics of the sixteenth century is well illustrated in Wilson's *The arte of Rhetorique*:

Scurrilitie or (to speake in old plain english) knavery in jestyng would not be used, where honestie is esteemed Therefore though there be some wit, in a pretie devised jeste: yet we ought to take hede, that we touche not those, whom we would be moste loth to offend. And yet some had as leve lose their life, as not bestowe their conceived jest, and oftentimes thei have, as thei desire. . . . Again, to jest when occasion is geven, or when the jest maie touch al men: it is thought to be against al good maner. Therefore the consideration of time, & moderacion of pastyme, & seldome usyng of drie mockes, even when nede moste requireth, make a difference, and shewe a severall understanding, betwixte a common jester, and a pleasaunt wise man.<sup>26</sup>

The passage expresses the orthodox Renaissance views of inappropriate jesting. Cordatus' description of Carlo is much like Wilson's.

<sup>24</sup>*Works of Aristotle*, ed. Ross, IX: *Ethica Nicomachea* iv. 8 (§1128<sup>a</sup>).

<sup>25</sup>The relevant passage follows:

"Quid enim potest esse tam ridiculum, quàm Sannio est? sed ore, vultu, imitandis moribus, voce, deniq, corpore ipso ridetur. Salsum hunc possum dicere, atque ita, ut non eiusmodi oratorem esse velim, sed ut mimum. Quare primum genus hoc quod risum vel maxime movet, non est nostrum, morosum, superstitiosum, suspiciosum, gloriosum, stultum. Naturae ridentur ipsae, quas personas agitare solemus, non sustinere." (*Marci Tullii Ciceronis de oratore libri tres*, p. 194.)

<sup>26</sup>Sir Thomas Wilson, *The arte of Rhetorique* ([London] R. Graftonus, 1553), sig. 14 or fol. 76.

He calls him "an impudent common jester, a violent railer," who "will sooner lose his soul than a jest." No honorable or reverend personage whatever can come within the reach of his eye, but is turned into all manner of variety by his adulterate similes. These facts make it probable that Jonson devised Carlo to serve as a conventional buffoon rather than as a thinly disguised representation of one of his contemporaries—a foulmouthed jester, called "Charles the Fryer," of Chester.<sup>77</sup> *to 20 33*

The predisposition to regard the victims of Jonson's ridicule as representatives of particular persons in Jonson's milieu obscures the significance of the action in most of his plays. To approach his dramatic figures with this preconception is to reduce the satiric comedies to a loosely connected series of personal lampoons.<sup>78</sup> The dramatis personae of his plays should be regarded, first, as parts of a coherent theatrical structure and, second, as stage types. Undoubtedly Jonson, in order to make his creations vividly realistic, borrowed for their depiction idiosyncrasies of individuals, of his world, whom he was not averse to deriding. But he observed the decorum of personal satire. Its procedure in many ways resembled that employed in Elizabethan allegory or in works of literature in which allusions of all sorts were inserted. The authors of such works scrupulously avoided the literal equivalence of mathematical formulae. That would have betrayed crass lack of skill. When resemblances between artistic creations and real individuals ran the risk of becoming obvious, the author knew that it was time to dart away from the specific into the objective and the general. Recognition of that fact should constitute one of the cardinal principles of those seeking to interpret the satiric movement in any of its phases.

Carlo, then, illustrates, in his speech and in his deeds, Jonson's ideas of a typical buffoon, an improper agent of satire. His actions occasionally become sheer farce. In one scene, he significantly reveals himself as adept in the arts of the merriest buffoon of the Renais-

<sup>77</sup>Baskervill (*op. cit.*, pp. 174-75) gives his reasons for accepting this identification. They do not convince me. Perhaps Jonson drew some descriptive details from a notorious contemporary who represented strikingly the traditional buffoon.

<sup>78</sup>I have tried to show, in a recent article ("The Dramatic Construction of *Poetaster*," *Huntington Library Bulletin*, No. 9 [Apr., 1936], pp. 37-62), that to approach the characters of *Poetaster* from this point of view is to lose sight of the principles upon which Jonson has constructed that comedy and to make him appear as an incredibly bungling dramatic craftsman. Cf. below, pp. 110-12.

sance stage, the loutish clown of the *commedia dell' arte*. This is when Carlo impersonates, in turn, each of two parties in a drinking bout. Their heated dispute over the proper punctilio to be observed in such a contest mounts to a serious altercation between them. Then Carlo, assuming his own person again, attempts to settle this mock quarrel. He is apparently unsuccessful, for, to provide his fabricated drama with an effective catastrophe, he "over-turnes Wine, Pot, Cuppes, and all."<sup>29</sup> Such impersonation of two or more characters in a farcical dialogue was one of the most popular of the Italian clowns' *lazzi*. Will Kempe often introduced the same piece of buffoonery into his roles. As Launce in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, he presents a very successful version of this *lazzo*, when with the aid of his staff and his shoes he re-enacts the pathetic scene of his recent farewell to his family.<sup>30</sup> As Launcelot Gobbo, he uses the trick again in his dramatized dialogue between his Conscience and the Fiend.<sup>31</sup> Carlo, in adapting it, announces himself as the heir to the vast treasury of buffoonery and physical farce which the clowns of the *commedia dell' arte* had accumulated.

Carlo, being a typical buffoon, acts as such a creature should. He indulges in scurrility and raillery and other forms of linguistic license; and in his headlong addiction to his odious art he does not observe fitness of either time or place. In thus sharply distinguishing, for his audience, true satire from raillery and mere detraction, Jonson was but imitating the practice of the formal satirists. They repeatedly attack such manifestations of ill temper. The following lines of Marston are representative of their attitude:

Who cannot rail?—what dog but dare to bark  
'Gainst Phoebe's brightness in the silent dark?

Vain envious detractor from the good,  
What cynic spirit rageth in thy blood?<sup>32</sup>

The cynic's spirit, they knew, was a metempsychosis of a snarling dog and utterly unsuited to satire.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>29</sup>Sig. P<sub>3</sub>r<sup>6</sup>v.

<sup>30</sup>*The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II, iii, 1-35.

<sup>31</sup>*The Merchant of Venice*, II, ii, 1-33.

<sup>32</sup>Satire 4, ll. 9-10, 25-26 (*Works*, ed. Bullen, III, 280-81).

<sup>33</sup>Guilpin's attack on a railing humour employs an equally forceful figure—in fact, one that lays him open to the charges leveled against the buffoon.

"(Good Lord) that men should have such kennel wits  
To thinke so well of a scald railing vaine,

Carlo, throughout the play, labors under the disapproval of his author. His derision aims at no improvement of its victims. It is designed only to yield him idle amusement and to serve as empty display. Macilente is justified in accusing him of prostituting his art "at every Taverne and Ordinarie"<sup>34</sup>—of making it a vulgar spectacle. His comments upon the various fools form an anthology of crude figures of speech. Yet each in its context possesses a kind of preposterous pertinency that makes the audience laugh. Sometimes Carlo paints malicious copies of typical satiric portraits, like those described in the previous chapter. Such is his report of what he sees when he peeks through a keyhole to observe Sogliardo's efforts to take tobacco in the manner that Shift recommends: "We might see Sogliardo sit in a Chaire, holding his snowt up like a Sow under an Apple-tree, while th'other open'd his Nostrills with a Poking-sticke, to give the smoake a more free deliverie."<sup>35</sup> The wit to be found in his simpler comments is similarly damned with ill-natured vulgarity. Of Brisk he says: "He looks like a colonel of the Pigmies horse, or one of these motions in a great antique clocke: hee would shew well upon a Habberdashers stall, at a corner shop."<sup>36</sup> Such sallies are Jonson's own comments, made, as it were, through an amplifier which grotesquely distorts both his thought and its form of expression. In this way, Carlo offers his author invaluable aid in making his dramatic enterprise successful.

He also helps in effecting whatever supple construction the comedy possesses. For example, it is he who gives Sogliardo instructions in gentlemanly behavior. But he frames his precepts with no idea of ridiculing the pseudo gallant out of his affectations. He wishes only to force the fool to become a spectacle for his private amusement. Yet his sport helps explain and expose Sogliardo to the audience. The fact that he mistakes Carlo for an expert in gentility writes him down most indelibly as a gull. In similar fashion Carlo's comments point the exposition of Fastidious and Puntarvolo. He plays with

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Which soone is vented in beslavered writs.  
 As when the cholicke in the gutts doth straine,  
 With civill conflicts in the same embrac't,  
 But let a fart, and then the worst is past."

(*Skiaetheia*, Epigram 7, sig. A4.)

<sup>34</sup>I, ii, sig. Dv.

<sup>35</sup>Sig. M.

<sup>36</sup>Sig. E.

similes as wantonly as did Falstaff, but not in his spirit of gay intellectual adventure. Carlo's verbal flights are expressions of a bitterly scornful attitude. His similes are "stabbing similes," which do not deride the folly so much as wound the fool.

In the final scene in the ordinary, Carlo assumes a twofold role. As the characters gather there for the purgation of their humours, he becomes at once the agent and the object of the author's derision. Urged by Macilente to attack the fools, the profane jester begins by taunting Puntarvolo with the loss of his dog, which Macilente has poisoned. Carlo is characteristically cruel and unrestrained, advising him to 'stuff the dog's skin with straw or, while he is passing through Germany, to acquire a familiar spirit and let it turn itself into his lost pet. That goads Puntarvolo to avenging action. He subdues Carlo, and, while the constable beats at the door, seals up his lips. This is a condign and appropriate punishment for the bitter jester. His fate involves him in the play's program of reform. He, like the humour figures, is forced by violent means, if necessary, to realize the evil consequences of giving rein to his master bias. Such a determined and severe spirit of correction relates this denouement to the temper of formal satire. It is far removed from the merry tricks of Justice Clement. In thus meeting disaster at the end of his career, in *Every Man Out of His Humor* Carlo is made to show that his derisive attitude and his vindictiveness fail to accomplish any reform in others, but make a fool of him. His methods are thereby branded as futile and subversive to any justifiable satiric writing.

Macilente and Carlo represent Jonson's first attempt to invent dramatic figures capable of assuming the duties which were proper to the authors of formal satire. Each joins himself to a persistent tradition of Renaissance comedy and each satisfies the demands of orthodox dramatic and satiric theory. Yet both the typical buffoon and the incarnation of envy become, in Jonson's hands, human beings for whom the more imaginative critics have created private lives as irrelevant to the characters' dramatic business in the play as was the girlhood of Shakespeare's heroines." More important for the present

"The following description of Carlo, the man, by R. A. Small, is one of many which prove the point: "Carlo was, then, a professional diner-out, who secured his invitations by his indiscriminate witticisms at the expense of friends and foes alike, a poor gourmand hanging at the skirts of aristocracy, but never able to attain to the circles of the court." (*The Stage-Quarrel between Ben Jonson and the So-called Poetasters* [Breslau, 1899], p. 36.)

study is the influence which these two agents of satire exerted upon subsequent plays written in this novel mode. Indeed, the inclusion of a representative of one or both of these figures in a comedy became a distinguishing mark of the new type.

The presence of the two critical spectators, Mitis and Cordatus, who follow the action with comment, shows that Jonson realized that his unfamiliar dramatic form needed constant elucidation and defense. The conversations of the pair deal with two matters: the theories of satire and comedy, and the problems of dramatic construction which Jonson had to solve. The critical pronouncements upon the general theoretical subject restate the principles which have been here reviewed. Those parts of the dialogue which reflect the author's difficulties in reducing his material to effective dramatic form are more noteworthy. They indicate that Jonson clearly found it hard to give his play a sense of movement. The simplest dramatic equivalent of the procession of fools who follow one another over the pages of a formal satire was a similar procession of *dramatis personae* made to file across the stage. Jonson does adopt a method of sequence, in the appearance of his humour figures, that is almost as mechanical. This he tries to conceal from his audience—but unsuccessfully. At the close of the second scene of Act Two—a scene in which Sogliardo, Fungoso, Fastidious, and Puntarvolo have all appeared and displayed themselves merely by their talk—Mitis complains of tedium. The scene, he thinks, "hung i'the hand." Cordatus, speaking in the author's defense, replies that he does not see how he could have "insisted lesse, and t'have made the Humors perspicuous enough." Mitis grants that, but believes the play would have gained in interest if the author had explicated each of his characters in single scenes. But Cordatus pointedly asks, "Is it not an object of more State, to behold the *Scene* full, and reliev'd with varietie of Speakers to the end, than to see a vast emptie stage, and the Actors come in (one by one) as if they were dropt down with a feather into the eie of the Audience?"<sup>28</sup>

This discussion reveals the precise difficulties of construction which Jonson encountered. In order to transform the procession of derided or scolded figures, which marches through the formal satires, into groups of characters acting and reacting upon each other, he was

<sup>28</sup>II, ii, sig. F4<sup>r</sup>&v.

forced to keep his stage filled with eccentrics. Most of them are related by blood or by marriage, and it is their natural encounters which excite them to self-revelation. Moreover, whenever any one of the principal characters is given a scene in which to make an extended display of his humour, he is surrounded by a number of the other fools posturing in their favorite attitudes. Such a device gives only pictorial coherence to the scenes. Each fool is too much preoccupied with his own folly to involve himself in dramatic entanglements with the characters about him. As a substitute for unity and movement of action, which *dramatis personae*, each completely absorbed in himself, were incapable of giving to the comedy, Jonson presented groups of eccentrics who move grotesquely from one pattern into another. The scenes in which the characters are purged of their humours are particularly important examples of that method. The derided figures are forced strongly to pursue their folly up to the very end of the play. And this, Cordatus explains, is a literary virtue. When they are made to fall from the height of their humours, flat upon the ground, they change all at once the nature of the spectacle, and fill more effectively the eyes of both their observant fellows and the audience in the theatre." On their embarrassed exit they are pursued by the scornful comment of Macilente. Their sudden deflation, to the accompaniment of derision, represents Jonson's successful effort to unite at the crucial point in his comical satire a reversal of fortune appropriate to comedy with the harsh spirit of formal satire.

In his choice of characters to ridicule and in his cruel methods of derision, Jonson also follows the inhibited satirists. Superficially, the *dramatis personae* can be classified according to their vocations. They all belong to the court, the city, or the country. And, though each is in some sense of the word a "humour" figure and a product of the physiological psychology of Jonson's time, few are distorted by a narrow application of this theory. They are the victims of their temperaments, but not obsessed by them. Moreover, they are not mere impersonations of traditional vices and follies. Almost every one of them represents some aspect of the social and economic revolu-

<sup>200</sup>"Why therein his Art appeares most full of lustre, and approacheth nearest the life, especially when in the flame and height of their Humors they are laid flat, it fills the eye better, and with more contentment." (IV, v, sig. Ov.)



tion which was being wrought in contemporary England by the growing conquests of the new capitalism.

Sordido, for example, represents the economic royalist of the day—a man who gives free rein to his acquisitive instincts. As a kind of miser he takes his place in the long line of such creatures who, since the dawn of literature, have stimulated the ridicule of satirists and the severity of moralists. But Sordido is the sort of miser most immediately and widely hated by Jonson's contemporaries. He is a hoarder of grain, a lawbreaker, and an oppressor of the poor—in fact, one of the meanest of criminals. He is thus never merely absurd, but uniformly detestable. Even his superstitious belief in his almanac's prognostications of foul weather is the result of an insane eagerness for conditions that will allow full scope to his greed. The exasperation which the Elizabethan audience would feel toward this common enemy obviated the need for Macilente or Buffone to practice their art on him, and makes dramatically logical the melodrama of his attempted hanging and regretted rescue by the peasants. Only violent means could accomplish the correction and repentance of such a monster. Even though a critic must admit the emotional logic of the catastrophe, it is not psychologically acceptable to a modern reader. However, attempted hanging had become a conventional way of disposing of bankrupt speculators in wheat, like Sordido; indeed, the other details of his career, including his superstitious reverence for almanacs, were likewise conventional. In Sordido,

"The following incident, told in Castiglione's *The Courtier* as an illustration of "things . . . that uncrediblye passe the likelihoode of truth," is precisely similar to that which Sordido enacts: "And *M. Augustin Bevazzano* toulde, that a covetous manne whiche woulde not sell hys corne while it was at a highe price, whan he sawe afterwarde it had a great falle, for desperacion he hanged himself upon a beame in his chamber, and a servaunt of his hearing the noise, made speede, and seeing his maister hang, furthwith cut in sunder the rope and so saved him from death: afterwarde whan the covetous man came to himselfe, he woulde have had hys servaunt to have paid him for his halter that he had cut." (Baldassare Castiglione, *The Courtier . . . done into Englyshe by Thomas Hoby* [London, 1561], sig. X [quoted Baskervill, *op. cit.*, p. 205].) Hall treats in the same way the successful manipulator of the market in grain:

"Altho he smother up mowes of seeven yeares graine,  
And hang'd himselfe when corn grows cheap againe."

(*Virgidemiarum*, Lib. 4, Satire 6, sig. D7.)

"Stubbes rebukes, in his characteristically direct fashion, the impostors who fabricate prophetic almanacs: "Therefore prognosticators are herein much to be blamed, for that they take upon them to foreshew what things shall be plentie, and what scarce, what deere, what good cheape. When shal be faire weather, when foule, and the like,

then, Jonson transferred bodily to his play the representative of avarice which the formal satirists had vigorously attacked. He shared their detestation of such miserly oppressors of the poor, whom contemporary economic conditions had brought to monstrous birth.

Jonson also followed the satirists in the prominence which he gives to derision of social pretenders in *Every Man Out of His Humor*. He designs them to represent different social strata. Highest in the scale is Fastidious Brisk. His ambitions will be satisfied only when he has established himself securely at court. Baskervill believes that Jonson drew many of Brisk's characteristics from those of Pride as he appeared in the morality plays and interludes,<sup>4</sup> and from the prose satires of Greene and Nashe.<sup>5</sup> But Brisk's less remote literary ancestors are the would-be gallants so persistently derided by the formal satirists. These appeared in their works as the absolute Castilios, the hermaphroditic Cyprians, the Briscuses, and the Gallios.<sup>6</sup> Jonson is like the satirists, not only in emphasizing the fatuous ardor of the fop to acquire all the amenities and inanities of courtship, but also in revealing the effeminacy of his tastes and occupations. Fastidious clearly believes that euphuistic conversation is the finest flower of culture. He boasts of the "devine *Rapture*" of living in the Presence and of his discourse with the "glorious and almost immortall beauties" there. But his pseudo elegance deceives no one but Deliro's

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whereas indeede the knowledge of these things are hid in the secrets of God, and are beyond their reach, therefore ought they not to meddle with them." (Phillip Stubbes, *Anatomy of the Abuses in England in Shakespeare's Youth* [1583], ed. F. J. Furnivall [New Shakspeare Soc., Ser. 6, No. 12; London, 1882], p. 66 [quoted Baskervill, *op. cit.*, p. 204].)

Hall, in an attack on many forms of judicial astrology, singles out for special reprobation the man who reveres the prognostications set forth in an almanac:

"His feare or hope, for plenty or for lack,  
Hangs all uppon his *New-yeares Almanack*.  
If chance once in the spring his head should ake:  
It was foretold: Thus saies mine *Almanack*."

(*Op. cit.*, Lib. 2, Satire 6, sig. D7<sup>v</sup>.)

<sup>4</sup>Baskervill, *op. cit.*, pp. 187-88. He points out, in particular, resemblances between Brisk and Pride, as the figure appears in Henry Medwall's *Nature*, and as Courtly Abusion in Skelton's *Magnificence*. But Jonson makes it clear that Brisk's pride is not the ostentation of a veritable courtier. Macilente explains that his relation to a true courtier is

" . . . like a *Zani* to a Tumbler,  
That tries trickes after him to make men laugh."

(IV, i, sig. L2<sup>v</sup>.)

<sup>5</sup>Baskervill, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

<sup>6</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 190-95, presents a number of these predecessors of Brisk.

wife Fallace. Only to her bourgeois ignorance does this fantastic exquisite seem the end of every wife's desire.

Matheo [Matthew] in *Every Man in His Humor* is a similar sort of pretender, though more modest in station and in ambition. But the likeness of the two serves only to emphasize the difference in the manner of treatment accorded them by Jonson; and the importance of that difference is a measure of the originality of Jonson's new conception of comedy. Matheo was revealed by simply assigning him a place among the realistically drawn London types, whose natural encounters produce merriment. He is no part of a carefully explained program of exhibition. Nor is he submitted to the sort of correction which is characteristic of satire. Justice Clement, to be sure, makes a bonfire of his plagiarized poems. Though Matheo's pretensions are exposed to the audience as hollow, he does not renounce his addiction to verse. He finds in the rebuke merely a new opportunity to follow the lead of Bobadilla [Captain Bobadill]. This time it is his hero's stoic indifference to humiliation that he imitates. His persistence in admiration of his fraudulent guide shows that the Justice's ridicule has not reformed him at all. His tenacious clinging to folly sharply differentiates his final appearance from that of figures in formal satire.

Fastidious runs much truer to type, not only in the comic denouement but also throughout his dramatic career. At his first appearance he is labeled and his humour identified in a conversation between Mitis and Cordatus.<sup>45</sup> He is described as a fresh Frenchified courtier, as humorous as quicksilver. Then Brisk at once begins to display his individual follies—an exhibition which Carlo points by describing him in a characteristic sally of caustic similitudes: "His braine's lighter than his feather alreadie, . . . he sleepes with a muske-cat every night, and walkes all day hang'd in Pomander chaines for pennance." To such an accompaniment of comment from Carlo and Macilente, Fastidious exposes himself. Even the supreme exhibition of his humour is not trusted to speak for itself. While he seeks to impress Saviolina by puffing valiantly at his pipe, twanging his

<sup>45</sup>*Mit.* What bright-shining gallant's that with them? the knight they went to?

*Cord.* No sir, this is one Monsieur *Fastidius Briske*, otherwise cal'd the fresh Frenchified courtier.

*Mit.* A humorist too?

*Cord.* As humorous as quicksilver."

(II, i, sigs. D4<sup>v</sup>-E.)

viol, and exhibiting other social accomplishments, Macilente is at hand to keep the audience in the proper satiric attitude, through his biting asides.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, he brings Deliro to the counter at the moment Brisk and Fallace are exchanging sentimental kisses. For such brazen infidelity the husband takes a tradesman's vengeance. He presses three actions for the recovery of the money he has lent to the fop. The fear of imprisonment for debt sweeps Brisk clean of his affectations and of the self-assurance and pride which led him to adopt them. He signalizes his cure by the fatuous exclamations, "O God, I am undone" and "O Jesu!" Even so obvious a spectacle of discomfiture provokes Macilente's jeers, "What doe you sigh? this it is to kisse the hand of a Countesse."<sup>45</sup> Thus, at every moment in his dramatic career, Fastidious is visibly in the control of a force outside himself, which ridicules all his actions and manipulates them toward purgation of the folly and deflation of the fool. These are the traditional methods not of comedy but of formal satire.

On a social stratum definitely below that of Fastidious Brisk, Fungoso moves and persistently follows the prompting of his folly. He is the son of the miserly Sordido—a fact which leads Baskervill<sup>46</sup> to believe that he represents the typical spendthrift son of a stingy father. But Fungoso is no mere prodigal wasting the money of his parsimonious sire. He is the victim of a more specific obsession. His sole interest is to exhibit himself in clothes of the latest cut. To indulge his expensive taste he is driven to all sorts of shifts in order to get money out of his father. The satirists were familiar with that sort of fool and called him a "fashionmonger." Marston, for example, twice<sup>47</sup> pays his respect to such a clothes-hound, and Hall's Ruffio, whom he derides in the third book of his *Virgidemiarum*,<sup>48</sup> has fasted his body lean in order to have money to spend on fine clothes.

<sup>44</sup>III, iii, *passim*.

<sup>45</sup>Sig. R2.

<sup>46</sup>*Op. cit.*, pp. 205-6.

<sup>47</sup>*Scourge of Villainy*, "In Lectores prorsus indignos," ll. 1-6 (*Works*, III, 300); and in his third satire (ll. 1-33 [*Works*, III, 276-77]), where he presents a figure who, like Fungoso, is in despair lest the fashion change before he can appear on the street in his new clothes. Marston dismisses him with the contemptuous remark that he is as fantastic in his spirit as with his clothes:

"Why, so he is, his clothes do sympathise  
And with his inward spirit humorise,  
As sure as (some do tell me) evermore  
A goat doth stand before a brothel door."

<sup>48</sup>"Meane while I wonder at so proud a backe,  
Whiles th'emptie guts loud rumblen for long lacke."

Mitis, in his portrait of Fungoso, emphasizes the same traits of the typical fashionmonger. His humour is described as "enamour'd of the Fashion."<sup>81</sup> The most extravagant of his utterances betray this strange infatuation. "I'd aske no more of God now, but such a Suit, such a Hat, such a Band, such a Doublet, such a Hose, such a Boot, and such a ——"<sup>82</sup> He farcically follows Fastidious about, accompanied by a tailor, who, he thinks, will be able to copy the clothes of that perfect gentleman. Jonson shows that Fungoso's eagerness is folly, because, in spite of all that he can do, he always remains at least one style behind his glass of fashion.

His ill-fortune makes him, too, see his infatuation as the ruinous folly it is. When the constable breaks into the room at the inn where the eccentrics are carousing, all flee without paying the reckoning, except Fastidious and Fungoso. The former is haled off to the counter and the latter crawls under the table. George, the drawer, discovers him, pulls him out, and insists that he pay the bill for all the food and drink that have been consumed. Fungoso protests that he has no money at all, but his fine clothes completely discredit the excuse. So he is held in durance until Deliro returns with the necessary cash. Fungoso has been so terrified by his experience that he is purged of his folly, protesting, "I have done imitating any more Gallants either in purse or apparrell." This lively scene, ending in repentance, is more efficacious corrective satire than the scornfully indicated contrast, between grandeur of clothes and poverty, with which Hall and Marston, in their satires, take leave of his prototype.

Sogliardo, too, is possessed by "the humour of gentility." Even more witless than Fungoso, he is a country booby who is willing to spend any amount of his new ready money to buy the manners of a gentleman. Macilente says he is one of these mushroom gentlemen that shoot up, in a night, to place and worship. He seeks novelty and whatever will arouse his open-mouthed amazement—hobby-horses, motions (that is, puppet shows), the elegant taking of tobacco, or any piece of news. This addict to facile wonder has also appeared

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The bellie envieth the backs bright glee,  
And murmurs at such inequality."

(Satire 7, sig. F3.)

<sup>81</sup>Sig. F2.

<sup>82</sup>Sig. F2v.

in the works of the satirists. Guilpin, for example, presents Caius, who registers his ludicrous amazement at everything by exclaiming, "*oh rare*."<sup>83</sup> The exposition of Sogliardo is conducted by the derisive Carlo, to the running comment of Macilente, which envy often turns into vituperation.<sup>84</sup> Carlo's ironic instructions to Sogliardo on the proper conduct of a gentleman<sup>85</sup> are double-edged satire. They form ill-natured ridicule of the affectations of the current counterfeit gentlemen and expose the gull by stimulating him to gulp them down with fatuous eagerness. In fact, Sogliardo's every remark, every gesture, including his worshipful attitude toward the fraudulent soldier, the "Thredbare Sharke" Shift,<sup>86</sup> are mocked by the ubiquitous Carlo. The audience is expected to laugh at the buffoon's success in sinking this hulk of ignorance in the depths of contempt. But to prevent its approval of Carlo's violent detraction and his prodigal use of mordant similes, Jonson permits Macilente to interrupt Carlo's unrestrained ridicule with direct rebuke of his method. The burden of his text is that "to prostitute" his wit "at every Taverne and Ordinarie" is to put it to the worst possible use. Jonson thus establishes a hierarchy of commentators to control the attitude of his audience toward Sogliardo, and, for that matter, toward all the other fools. During the scenes devoted to their display he allows that attitude to become completely derisive, but assigns to Macilente

<sup>83</sup>"As Caius walks the streets, if he but heare  
A blackman grunt his note, he cries *oh rare*!  
He cries *oh rare*, to heare the *Irishmen*  
Cry pippe, fine pippe, with a shrill accent, when  
He comes at Mercers chappell; and, *oh rare*,  
At *Ludgate* at the prisoners plaine-song there: . . ."

(*Skiaetheia*, Epigram 68, "Of Caius," sig. B6.)

Baskervill (*op. cit.*, pp. 207-8) traces many of Sogliardo's characteristics to the allegorical figure of Ignorance and suggests that the coat of arms typifying Sogliardo's character was a simplification of a similar coat of arms provided by Erasmus for his *False Knight*.

<sup>84</sup>The following lines are typical:

"Sbloud, why should such a prick-eard Hind as this  
Bee rich? Ha? a foole such a transparent gull  
That may be seene through?"

(I, ii, sig. C3<sup>v</sup>.)

<sup>85</sup>This ironic advice is drawn largely from the *Familiar Colloquies* of Erasmus, as Whalley, Gifford, and Baskervill (*op. cit.*, p. 179) have all pointed out.

<sup>86</sup>Baskervill (*op. cit.*, pp. 180-84) establishes Shift's relation to the conycatcher in earlier English literature. He carries the origin of the type back to literary conceptions of Vainglory and Adulation. As usual, Jonson has given the figure many characteristics of the sharks of contemporary London.

the duty of preventing the laughter of the crowd from overstepping the bounds of either literary or ethical decorum.

Sogliardo is also "dishumored" by a method similar to that applied to his brothers in stupidity. Macilente presides over an ensemble scene in which both he and Shift are purged. Puntarvolo, persuaded by Macilente that Shift has stolen his dog, by the mere utterance of a threat makes him kneel and protest his innocence. This abject cowardice of the arrant swashbuckler opens Sogliardo's eyes as wide as his nature permits. He denounces his erstwhile hero as a "base *Viliaco*," renounces his friendship with him, and, by implication, the blindness on which it was founded. "Here were a couple unexpectedly dishumor'd," is the exclamation with which Macilente announces his purgation of the pair.

Jonson applied similar methods of depiction, exposure, and reformation to the other representatives of social affectation whom he presents in this play. An analysis of his treatment of Puntarvolo, Saviolina, Deliro, and Fallace would yield approximately the same results that have already been obtained and would thus be superfluous for the purposes of the present study. Their prototypes in the works of the inhibited satirists are as definite as those of the characters examined above.<sup>7</sup> Jonson's ridicule of them, as of the others, is therefore an expression of the same economic and social prejudices which the formal satirists had betrayed.<sup>8</sup>

More important for the history of the drama during the years

<sup>7</sup>Puntarvolo is the most curious and peculiar of these four figures. But I agree with Baskervill (*op. cit.*, p. 195) that he represents an older, demoded type of courtier as effectively as Brisk does the more modish version; I also agree with him (*ibid.*) that Guilpin had sketched the same sort of Don Fashion in the following lines:

" . . . But soft, whom have we heare?  
What brave Saint *George*, what mounted *Cavaliere*?  
He is all court-like, Spanish in's attyre,  
He hath the right ducke, pray God he be no *Frier*."

(*Op. cit.*, *Satire 5*, sig. D7.)

<sup>8</sup>Clove and Orange are exceptions to the general critical statements made of the other characters. Jonson has Cordatus inform the audience that they are "meere straungers to the whole scope of our Play; only come to walke a turne or two i' this *Scene of Paules* by chaunce." (III, i, sig. H3.) Orange is little more than an embodied social idiosyncrasy—ceremonious salutation—seeking to impress the world with learning which he does not possess. Though I agree with Penniman and Small that Clove certainly does not represent Marston, I am inclined to believe that in his speech Marston's pretentious vocabulary is indirectly ridiculed. The incidental nature of Clove's position in the comedy gives warrant for this hypothesis. No current of larger social import is muddled by the intrusion of personal satire in his case.

immediately subsequent to 1599 were the new conventions of dramatic narrative which Jonson established in *Every Man Out of His Humor*. They became the distinguishing features of the new type of play which he decided should be called "comical satire." The convention that became most distinctive of the new genre was the presence of at least one commentator, and usually two, upon the characters and the dramatic action. The first was a buffoon, a fellow animated by a bitter spirit of detraction and equipped with a mordant imagination and an arsenal of slashing similes. He raked the fools with his vocabulary of wrath and scorn. Mirth of a crude sort he could arouse among the spectators, but they were made to realize that it was indecorous and vacant, and obviously joined to no intelligent criticism of manners or of morals. The second commentator more clearly represented the dramatist in his newly assumed role of satirist. His was a keen intelligence, sharpened often by envy until it could cut to the quick of the folly dominating the derided character. These commentators, whether appearing alone or together, stood outside the action, sometimes even directing it as though they were stage managers of a sort. Their function was to keep alive in the spectators a hostile spirit of mockery toward practically all of the other figures in the comedy.

Jonson also established in *Every Man Out of His Humor* what was to be the typical career of the "humorous" figures in the new comical satires. Derisive exposition, exposure of their folly to the audience and to themselves, deflation, and, occasionally, announced reform followed each other in rapid succession. Like the satires, this new sort of comedy presented a large number of eccentrics. Jonson skilfully transformed into groups the procession of fools that had appeared in single file in the poems. The individuals were made to stimulate and to accentuate the follies of one another. At the moments when the posing of a particular fool reached its most advanced stage, the other gulls gathered to enjoy the exhibition and to become participants in the show. This group movement of the characters serves as a more or less effective substitute for the coherent plot of a traditional comedy. The fools attract the attention of the audience, at their first appearance, usually by twos and threes. They quicken its interest as they gather in larger groups to posture for each other, and they create a definite sort of suspense when they finally fill the



stage in large ensemble scenes. There, at last, their humours assume so extravagant a form that the spectators begin to anticipate the catastrophe which is impending for all the gulls. The complete deflation of the fools, one by one, realizes the joyous anticipation of the audience. Then the crowd of eccentrics dissolves under a rain of ridicule with which the spectators pelt them as they disappear off stage.

This state of mind is quite unlike that in which an audience finds itself at the close of an ordinary comedy. Jonson made no effort to arouse an emotion in the faintest way resembling the satisfaction normally felt at the triumph of the hero and heroine over circumstance and their antagonists. Nor did he attempt to produce any sort of comic *catharsis* approved by the authoritative critics who have been quoted in the previous chapters. His professed aim was to arouse ethical satisfaction at the reform of knaves, and relief at the disappearance of folly from the social group to which one could imagine himself as belonging. Thus doubly reformed, the world became vicariously a more comfortable habitation for an intelligent man. To put the matter into emotional terms, a comical satire left its audience with a sense of release which came with the disappearance of its obligation to censure and to reform its foolish contemporaries.

In reality, however, *Every Man Out of His Humor*, and other plays cast in the dramatic mold which it created, do not leave the reader with any such unmixed serenity. These satiric comedies effect no real purgation of uncomfortable emotions. Almost without exception, they leave audience and reader in an aroused state of scorn at human folly and futility. The laughter which should be corrective and salutary to both its subjects and its objects remains, until the last figures have left the stage, and even afterward, turbulent and hostile. These formal characteristics reappear, in some guise, in all the comedies which can be said to belong to the new dramatic type of comical satire. They can therefore be regarded as distinguishing characteristics of the genre.

*Every Man Out of His Humor* has never been accounted good dramatic entertainment. Its structure has been stigmatized as too formal and rigid to give its spectators any sense of human reality. This defect has usually been explained as a result of a strange submergence of Jonson's dramatic sense by critical faculties suddenly

become dominant. But our analysis suggests that the theatrical weakness of *Every Man Out of His Humor* was rather due to the author's mechanically close adherence to the conventions of formal satire—a natural mistake in a dramatist making his initial effort to devise a new form of comedy. Nevertheless, the play possesses many vigorous virtues. It gives both a structural and an intellectual unity to the dramatic careers of a very large number of creatures who deserve the derision which Jonson systematically directs against them. To use a phrase of Herford and Simpson's, it presents life in its "motley kaleidoscopic disarray." Yet *Every Man Out of His Humor* clearly left Jonson dissatisfied with the solution of his problem. In his next two plays he attempted to correct the faults of his first comical satire—with what success we shall now seek to determine.

## CHAPTER IV

### *Cynthias Revels*

Jonson's next play, *Cynthias Revels*, was first acted in the year 1600. It evidently enjoyed some success on the stage, if we are to believe the advertisement, on the title-page of the quarto, announcing that "it hath beene sundry times privately acted in the Black-Friers by the Children of her Majesties Chappell." Jonson called this play, also, a "Comicall Satyre," thus announcing it as his second conscious attempt to construct a successful dramatic equivalent of formal satire. In composing it he paid as little heed to the classical rules and the conventions of pure comedy as he had done in *Every Man Out of His Humor*. But he tried to make *Cynthias Revels* more entertaining for the fashionable audiences of Blackfriars Theatre than his first comical satire had proved to be.

It, too, begins with an induction, which, however, is quite unlike that of *Every Man Out of His Humor*. Three child actors come on in their own persons. One of them, in spite of the opposition of the other two, manages to give a hurried outline of the plot. The boys then amuse themselves by mimicking the affectations of the ladies and gentlemen in the audience. They single out for particular attack the self-important, censorious sort of spectator who loves to lecture the author for the stale wit and sly obscenity which he assumes will defile the awaited play. Only when the boys have finished these satiric preliminaries does "Prologos" have a chance to make himself heard. He then flatters his particular audience even while he asserts his originality and independence of popular applause. He explains:

In this alone, his *Muse* her sweetnesse hath,  
She shuns the print of any beaten path;  
And proves new wayes to come to learned eares.

Hence his play

. . . . . affords,  
Words above Action: matter, above wordes.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*The Fountaine of Selfe-Love. Or Cynthias Revels. As it hath beene sundry times privately acted in the Black-Friers by the Children of her Majesties Chappell. Written by Ben: Johnson* (London, 1601), sig. B. My discussion of the play is based on this quarto version—a much shorter one than that which later appeared in the

The scene of the dramatic action is Gargaphia, a country where Cynthia holds her court. In its suburbs dwell four foolish gallants and four equally foolish court ladies. The men are Hedon, the voluptuous, whom Mercury attends as a page; Anaides, the personification of impudence; Amorphus, a deformed traveler, who has drunk of the Fountain of Self-love and brings the others news of its wonderful properties; and finally Asotus, the prodigal son of a rich citizen. The four women are Philautia, or self-love; Gelaia, laughter, a wench in boy's attire; Phantaste, a light-headed creature; and Argurion, the personification of money. The guardian of these ladies is Moria, Lady Folly herself. Some of the foibles of these pseudo courtiers are forced into exaggerated forms by the plots of the roguish Cupid and anatomized by Criticus, a retired scholar and commentator. At the end of the play the eight social pretenders all appear in a masque, which forms part of the revels appointed by Cynthia. Each disguises himself as the virtue directly opposite to the vice which habitually governs his conduct. Cynthia, however, sees through their attempted deception and unmasks them. Then in solemn ritual they renounce their folly and all its appurtenances.

This brief summary of the plot suggests that Jonson's efforts in writing the drama were largely directed to concealing the satiric scaffolding of which, in *Every Man Out of His Humor*, he had kept his audience constantly aware. To accomplish that purpose he borrowed devices familiar to ladies and gentlemen whose taste had been formed largely by progresses, pageants, and other forms of court show. Such entertainments were, in essence, continuous spectacles, in which classical myth and ingenious allegory were dressed in gorgeous theatrical apparel. Lyly's court comedies show how important

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folio. It is almost impossible to determine whether the passages peculiar to the folio are additions made sometime between 1600 and 1616. Judson argues that the additions represent later revisions of the author's original quarto text. (*Cynthia's Revels*, ed. A. C. Judson ["Yale Studies in English," XLV; New York, 1912], pp. xxix-xxxii.) Herford and Simpson (*Ben Jonson*, IV [1932], 17-22) take the opposite view. They believe that the folio represents the original text, and the quarto the version presented at court on January 6, 1601—an opinion first advanced by F. G. Fleay (*A Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama, 1559-1642* [London 1891], I, 362). The excisions thus represent the curb that Jonson felt it wise to put upon his satiric spirit when he exhibited it to an audience of courtiers. But may the quarto not also represent what Jonson believed to be a better acting version? Certainly, whatever values the passages peculiar to the folio possess are literary and not dramatic. Because I am concerned primarily with dramatic structure, I have chosen to base my discussion of the play upon the quarto version.

a part of the refined dramatic vernacular these decorative features had become by the last decades of the sixteenth century. They provided the sort of visual nourishment which an audience of courtiers demanded of a dramatist. Besides lending beauty to the stage pictures, the imaginative symbols formed a natural vehicle for the none-too-subtle adulation of herself which the Queen expected in every play planned for her eyes and ears. Consequently Jonson, in filling almost half of *Cynthias Revels* with mythological and allegorical devices, was adopting the easiest method of making his satire palatable to the particular audience for which it was written.

The narrow range of the satire in *Cynthias Revels* is at once remarked by the critic. The characters show little of that rich human variety which gave *Every Man Out of His Humor* its vitality. The four pseudo gentlemen, nicely balanced by the four pseudo ladies, all haunt the neighborhood of the Presence Chamber. And the comedy satirizes the vanity of only these sycophantic courtlings, as displayed in their dress, their bearing, and their speech.\* So protracted is the concentrated ridicule, and so exclusively devoted to esoteric forms of affectation, that the life depicted seems completely unreal. Hence much of the derision appears to be wasted on unimportant minutiae of courtly ritual. For this reason the laughter once aroused by *Cynthias Revels* now echoes but faintly down the corridors of Time.

Though it will appear later that the social infatuation of these gulls shines with its own light, Jonson introduces a group of commentators to interpret their antics. The expositors perform their duties as efficiently as the bitter Macilente and the repellent Carlo did for the gulls in *Every Man Out of His Humor*. The tone of the two sets of commentators is, of course, quite different. The little college of critics in *Cynthias Revels* is composed of Criticus, the scholar and stoic, Mercury, the god of wit, and his interlocutor,

\*Baskervill (*op. cit.*, pp. 214-58, *passim*), in an admirable analysis of the play, establishes this fact. He begins by indicating that Jonson has adopted "four fairly distinct lines of treatment." Baskervill describes the first as "the pastime of courtship," the second as the mythological element, the third as "the conflict between virtues and vices," the fourth as "individual studies in which the abstractions are made vital by details from contemporary fads and fashions." Indispensable as his analysis has proved to all students of the play (part of Herford and Simpson's essay on *Cynthias Revels* is clearly based on it), it has obscured such dramatic unity as the comedy possesses and hence tended to minimize the importance of the play in the development of comical satire.

Cupid—and, in a sense, Cynthia herself. Criticus, as representative of the author's satiric point of view, fills the one role that was considered indispensable to the dispatch of the dramatic business in these new comical satires. Like Macilente, he keeps the temper of *Cynthia's Revels* consistently derisive and corrective. His presence serves as a guide through the comedy's complex ways and checks the author's tendency to obscure its outlines under masses of decorative material.

So long as critics persisted in regarding the play as primarily a weapon forged by Jonson to attack his traducers, they assumed that Criticus not only uttered his ideas, but also represented in a literal way Jonson, the human personality. This double identification is no longer accepted by most scholars.<sup>3</sup> It was a product of a literal-

<sup>3</sup>J. H. Penniman, in *The War of the Theatres* ("Publications of the University of Pennsylvania, Series in Philology, Literature and Archaeology," IV, No. 3 [1897]), writes (p. 76): "We have shown that in *Every Man out of his Humour* the men attacked were Marston, Daniel, Lodge, and Munday. In *Cynthia's Revels* these men are represented respectively as Anaides, Hedon, Asotus, and Amorphus; Crites is of course Jonson." R. A. Small also assumes that Jonson presented himself under the names of Asper, Criticus, and Horace. (*Stage-Quarrel*, pp. 27-28.) The source of this identification is a remark which Tucca makes to Horace in *Satiro-mastix*: "You must be call'd Asper, and Criticus, and Horace, thy tytle's longer a reading then the Stile a the big Turkes: Asper, Criticus, Quintus, Horatius, Flaccus." (Thomas Dekker, *Satiro-mastix. Or The untrussing of the Humorous Poet* [London, 1602], sig. D.) Dekker also identifies Crispinus, who in the *Poetaster* admittedly represents Marston, with Hedon of this play; and Demetrius, obviously Dekker, with Anaides. The truth seems to be that Dekker, in order to justify his attack on Jonson, accumulates unjustified ex post facto insults, for himself and Marston, where clearly none were intended. Jonson, at least once, directly denied that he had attacked these dramatists in any play before *Poetaster*. This, the "apologeticall Dialogue: which was only once spoken upon the stage," he intended to append to the quarto, but did not do so. Consequently, it first appeared at the close of the 1616 folio edition of *Poetaster*. The following are the pertinent lines:

" . . . but sure I am, three yeeres,  
They did provoke me with their petulant stiles  
On every stage: And I at last, unwilling,  
But weary, I confesse, of so much trouble,  
Thought, I would try, if shame could winne upon 'hem."

("Apologeticall Dialogue," ll. 96-100 [Herrford and Simpson, *op. cit.*, IV, 320].)

Philip Aronstein was the first to present conclusive arguments against the complete identification of Criticus with Jonson. He writes: "Dass Jonson sich in dem vollkommenen Crites in *Cynthia's Revels* habe selbst darstellen wollen, . . . eine solche Abgeschmacktheit brauchen wir ihm nicht zur Last zu legen. Asper, Crites, Horaz, . . . —das sind einfach Verkörperungen der satirischen Weltbetrachtung, des ethischen Ideals des Dichters." (Review of Maurice Castelain's *Ben Jonson: L'Homme et l'oeuvre* [1572-1637] [Paris, 1907], in *Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, XLIV [1908], 373.) This opinion is now widely accepted.

mind interpretation of the subtly played Elizabethan game of personal and political allusion. More serious, from our point of view, is the fact that such a conception blinds the critic to the conventional satiric dramatic function which Criticus exercises in the play. In brief, he is Jonson's notion of an ideal critic of manners and morals. Only in that sense can he be regarded as Jonson's "own mouthpiece and antitype."<sup>4</sup> An understanding of this simple fact enables us to rescue the play from the region of mere pique and personal irritation and to elevate it into one of conscious art and of permanent satirical and ethical values.<sup>5</sup>

Criticus has a much more definite place in the plot of *Cynthias Revels* than that assigned to Asper-Macilente in *Every Man Out of His Humor*. He is attached to the court of the divine Cynthia as a kind of moral laureate. He represents the man of ideally balanced temperament. Mercury, in his role of presenter, describes him as one in whom the four humours exist in perfect equilibrium.<sup>6</sup> His judgments are thus true and righteous altogether. Baskervill<sup>7</sup> correctly

<sup>4</sup>Herford and Simpson, *op. cit.*, I, 409.

<sup>5</sup>In two scenes Criticus is attacked by the pseudo gallants with so much personal animus that even those critics who reject the identification of Criticus with Jonson believe that here, at least, is some direct reference to the war of the theatres. In the second scene of Act III, Hedon and Anaides execrate Criticus as a "whoore-sonne Book-worme," and, as he passes by, they jeer at him, asserting that "he smels all Lamp-oyle, with studying by Candle-light." (Sig. E4v.) Hedon then goes on to say that he will "speake all the venome I can of him; and poyson his reputation in every place." (Sig. F.) Yet, even while engaging in this dialogue, the two malicious creatures make it clear that their remarks are provoked by hate and contempt and that they represent Envy and Detraction. In other words, they embody the false satiric attitude which Jonson had already personified in Carlo Buffone. Despite, then, Dekker's identifications made in *Satiro-mastix*, Hedon need only fugitively suggest Marston, or Anaides, Dekker. If personal emotion, engendered by Jonson's own experience, must be discovered to explain his hostility to the mechanized courtier and his zany, it can be more plausibly found in the slights which lean-witted and crude persons on the fringes of society put upon Jonson, when he tried to climb out of the humble social class in which he still was confined in the year 1600. One of the attitudes of intellectual and social pretenders that could be most effectively dramatized was their bitter hostility to a man of learning and sound judgment. In other words, creatures like Anaides and Hedon, in both their realistic and their allegorical aspects, would act most characteristically in vilifying Criticus, regarded either as a man or as an abstraction. Later in the play, the female fops make a similar attack on the sage and serious Arete. (IV, v, sig. I3.)

<sup>6</sup>"A creature of a most perfect and divine temper; One, in whom the *Humors & Elements* are peaceably met, without aemulation of Precedencie: he is neither too fantastickly *Melancholy*; too slowly *Plegmatick*, too lightly *Sanguine*, or too rashly *Cholerick*, but in al, so composd and order'd; as it is cleare, Nature was about some full worke, she did more then make a man when she made him." (II, iii, sigs. D4v-E.)

<sup>7</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 261.

regards him as a kind of equivalent of Aristotle's "highminded man," but transliterated, as it were, into the alphabet of the physiological psychology of Jonson's age. Though representing, therefore, more than human perfection,<sup>9</sup> Criticus does not view the "humours" of the silly snobs as from a superior height.

He gazes on them with neither an indifferent nor a scornful eye. Their folly, seeming to him an unmistakable symptom of vice, provokes him to moral indignation. That emotion relates his temper to the spirit of castigation which animated Marston, Hall, and their fellow writers of formal satire. In the fourth scene of Act III Criticus expresses this conventionally stern spirit in a dramatic idiom distinctive of the same literary school. He has seen as in a dream

"The strangest Pageant, fashion'd like a Court,"

and he describes the pretenders as they pass by him one by one. Such excoriation of each individual in a procession of eccentrics was the favorite method of the formal satirists. The fact is, Criticus interrupts the action in order to compose in the Juvenalian tone such a poem, in miniature, as might have formed a part of *Virgidemiarum*, *The Scourge of Villainy*, or even of Gascoigne's *Steele Glas*. Indeed, the epilogue to Gascoigne's poem is an enumeration of effeminate courtiers, which Jonson may have used as a model for this excursion of Criticus.<sup>10</sup> His tone is as harsh as befits a man deriding truants

<sup>9</sup>Arete, in introducing Criticus to Cynthia at the close of the play, pronounces this encomium:

"Lo here the man; who, not of usuall earth,  
But of that nobler, and more precious mould  
Which *Phoebus* selfe doth temper, is compos'd."

(V, iii, sig. K4<sup>v</sup>.)

<sup>10</sup>III, iv. sig. F2<sup>r&v</sup>.

<sup>10</sup>The resemblance of the two passages was first pointed out by A. C. Judson in his edition of *Cynthia's Revels* (pp. xxxvi-xxxvii). The nature of the passage in *The Steele Glas* is well indicated by the following lines:

"Beholde (my lorde) what monsters muster here,  
With Angels face, and harmefull helish harts,  
With smyling lookes, and depe deceitful thoughts,  
With tender skinnies, and stony cruel mindes,  
With stealing steppes, yet forward feete to fraude."

(Gascoigne, *The Steele Glas*, "Epilogus," sig. I.)

The passage is usually taken to refer to women. R. M. Alden, for example, thinks the troop is one "of the affected and overdressed women of the period." (*Rise of Formal Satire*, p. 70.) Gascoigne's emphasis upon the use of cosmetics, devices for curling the hair, and gorgeous clothes is a stale convention in the Renaissance satires of women. But the segregation of this group from those treated in the body of the satire and their being stigmatized as



from sense and morality, for Criticus recognizes the crowd which files past him as composed of

Such as the Satyrists truly foorth,  
*Criminibus debent hortos, praetoria, mensas.*<sup>24</sup>

All of Criticus' set pieces or soliloquies express the same severe attitude. His pained view of the initial show that Amorphus and Asotus make of themselves provokes his first completely characteristic utterance:

. . . . . O vanity,  
 How are thy painted beauties doated on,  
 By light, and empty Ideots? how pursu'de  
 With open, and extended appetite?  
 . . . . .  
 O how dispisde, and base a thing is Man,  
 If he not strive t'erect his groveling thoughts  
 Above the straine of flesh? But how more cheape  
 When, even his best and understanding part,  
 . . . . .  
 Floates like a dead drown'd body, on the streame  
 Of vulgar humor, mixt with commonst dregs?  
 . . . . .  
 Why will I view them then? my Sence might aske me:  
 Or ist a Rarity, or some new Object,  
 That straines my strict observance to this point?  
 O would it were, therein I could afforde  
 My Spirit should draw a little neere to theirs,  
 To gaze on novelties: so *Vice* were one.  
 Tut, she is stale, ranke, foule, . . .

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"A stranger trowpe, than any yet were sene,"  
 suggests homosexual men, as do the following lines:

"They be not men: for why? they have no beards.  
 They be no boyes, which weare such side long gowns.  
 They be no Gods, for al their gallant glosse.  
 They be no divels, (I trow) which seme so saintish.  
 What be they? women? masking in mens weedes?  
 With dutchkin dublets, and with Jerkins jaggde?  
 With Spanish spangs, and ruffles fet out of France,  
 With high copt hattes, and fethers flaunt a flaunt?  
 They be so sure even Wo to Men in dede."

("Epilogus," sig. Iv.)

Even the pun in the last line, traditionally made on women, when placed as a kind of irrelevant answer to the list of rhetorical questions, is given far more effective point if applied to effeminate males. Indeed, much of the passage becomes feebly conventional, if not completely pointless, when regarded as satire of female fops.

<sup>24</sup>III, iv, sig. F2v.

Yet, in spite of the loathed and leprous face of Vice, we wish to look upon it,

And if we can but banish our owne sence,  
We acte our *Mimick* tricks with that free licence,  
That lust, that pleasure, that security,  
As if we practiz'd in a Past-boord case,  
And no one saw the *Motion*, but the *Motion*.<sup>11</sup>

These lines voice a much subtler idea of the purpose and methods of satire than that of a public scourger, armed with a whip of steel. There is here a suggestion that the only truly effective moral censor is an inward monitor, that Criticus is essentially the embodiment of a man's own common sense—a power capable in its own right of pronouncing follies to be manifestations of vice. When the censor abdicates, man is deprived of the only available effective restraint upon his foibles and infirmities. This conception is later given dramatic form in the first masque which Criticus devises for Cynthia, where are introduced the virtues directly opposite to the vices which have instigated the follies displayed.<sup>12</sup> Obviously, Criticus is not Jonson intruding awkwardly upon the creatures of his imagination, but a maturer Asper, the product of a more artful, if less dramatic, impulse of the comical satirist.

Mercury, the god of wit, is a presenter and commentator, performing services of exposition closely akin to those divided among Mitis, Cordatus, and Macilente in *Every Man Out of His Humor*. In the second act he and Cupid decide to comment on the fools who are to appear. They will for the nonce be mad wags, expressing their prejudices in sparkling and mordant language. Their descriptions assume a form much more like that invented by Theophrastus than that of the satiric portrait, which, as we have seen, Jonson imitated in *Every Man Out of His Humor*.<sup>13</sup> This economical way of launching characters upon the action of the play, when applied sparingly, is

<sup>11</sup>I, v, sigs. C4-D, *passim*.

<sup>12</sup>V, ii, sigs. K3v-K4.

<sup>13</sup>Casaubon's Latin edition of Theophrastus was published in 1592 (*Theophrasti characteres ethici, sive descriptiones morum Graece. Isaacus Casaubonus recensuit, in Latinum sermonem vertit et libro commentario illustravit* [Lugduni, 1592]) and was evidently known to Jonson. Judson (ed. of *Cynthia's Revels*, p. lxviii) writes that this second act "might well be called the first English character-book. It contains no fewer than eight perfect character-sketches, in method, general style, and length, remarkably similar to Overbury's or Earle's."

effective. But the crowding of eight long sketches into the single act clogs it with material essentially undramatic and places a heavy restraint upon the forward movement of the action. Yet Jonson's procedure is but an amplification of the method by which the figures were presented in formal satire. For that reason he clearly thought it not infelicitous in a comedy that sought to preserve the virtues of that banished literary type. The burden of exposition here is the heaviest that is imposed upon Mercury and Cupid, but much of the time they lurk behind the fools, ready, when occasion offers, to comment on them in biting asides. Thereby they keep the audience's attitude toward the humorous figures hostile and derisive, in the same way that Carlo and Macilente preserved the satiric spirit in *Every Man Out of His Humor*.

Cynthia, in the last act of the play, assumes the most exalted place among the critics and commentators. Jonson may have cast her in this role in order to put into her mouth fulsome praise of Criticus and thus suggest the justice of royal recognition for himself. But he could easily find artistic propriety in investing her with the chief critical function. Both as a symbol of the lawgiver to the English court and as a divine arbitress in her own right, Cynthia could appropriately rebuke the erring and commend the virtuous. In her the figures who perform the indispensable critical office in these satiric comedies have a representative endowed with picturesque and emotional richness. She clearly moves on a much higher aesthetic plane than that occupied by the terrifying Macilente and the repellent Carlo.

Once having decided to assign an important role to Cynthia, Jonson found himself committed to a full development of allegorical and mythological contrivances according to the conventions of the progress and other forms of court entertainment. In the moon-goddess' train inevitably appear creatures like Cupid, Mercury, Narcissus, and Echo, all eager to spin a tenuous sort of plot suited to their unsubstantial natures. In the first scene Cupid announces that Cynthia has decreed solemn revels, on which occasion all sorts of persons may visit her palace to court her nymphs. She thus gives her subjects an opportunity to observe how little she heeds "some black and envious slaunders howlerly breathd against her for her devine justice on Acteon as shee pretends."<sup>18</sup> This announcement is

<sup>18</sup>I, i, sig. B2v. This is a slightly veiled reference to the Queen's relations with Essex.

similar to Theseus', at the beginning of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. His court, he says, is soon to pass the time with pomp, with triumph, and with reveling. As in Shakespeare's comedy, the promised solemnity does not take place until the final scenes. The satiric business which fills the interval in Jonson's play is, therefore, from the point of view of plot, a mere protracted exposition of the characters who are later to seize the unusual opportunities offered them for taking part in elaborate ceremonies of courtship. The concluding scenes thus serve to exhibit in their full flood the social pretenders' follies with which the intervening scenes have made the audience thoroughly familiar.

The introduction of Echo suggests the device which is to bridge the gap between the faery haunts of Cynthia and the utterly mundane habitations of the fools. Echo appears, lamenting Narcissus, as always, and cursing the pool in which he has been drowned:

Henceforth, thou treacherous, and murdering spring,  
Be ever cald the *Fountaine of selfe loue*:  
And with thy water let this curse remaine,  
(As an inseperate plague) that who but tastes,  
A droppe thereof, may (with the instant touch)  
Grow dotingly enamour'd on themselves.<sup>10</sup>

Almost at once one of the fools, Amorphus the traveler, enters and drinks of the fountain. Its waters grossly exaggerate his natural humour and thus distort it into a form which most easily stimulates derision.

Such a contrivance does carry the audience expeditiously and safely down the rapid descent from the enchantments of Gargaphia, where the harsh spirit of satire dared not intrude, to a region far "this side the Alpes," where it could speak as plainly as it chose. Yet Jonson's use of the device has been criticized as wanton waste of the comic and satiric possibilities which fill to the brim his Fountain of Self-love. Amorphus and the other pretenders were fools before they quaffed the water. Hence it could not work in them any such surprising transformations as those which the juice of "love-in-idleness" produced in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. But, besides effecting a difficult imaginative transition, the conceit in itself exposed

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I accept the interpretation of Herford and Simpson (*op. cit.*, I, 395) that what Jonson here adverts to is Essex' bold intrusion into the Queen's chamber, in September, 1599, where he surprised her at her toilet. For this offense she had him imprisoned.

<sup>10</sup>I, ii, sig. B4v.

the danger of immoderate ambition. The fountain in which Latona and her ageless nymphs could find restoration and hourly pleasure became for creatures devoid of any spark of divinity the poison of self-love. Similarly the graces of the court, which embellish the life of an adept, render uncouth and ridiculous the loutish and the low who seek to don them by force.

Furthermore, Jonson does not regard such self-love as a harmless folly. He says, "Slicke flatterie and she/Are twin-born sisters." By thus debasing self-love to a position among the vices, he establishes the spirit in which the "humours" of the characters are ridiculed. Criticus, who guides the audience through the varied manifestations of self-love, never regards them as mere stupid aberrations from common sense, but as manifestations of serious moral turpitude. That was the opinion of all the moralists of Jonson's day. Lodge, for example, in his *Catharos*, makes Diogenes say that self-love, or Philautia, is the source of every form of sensuality and pride, that, whereas "the love of God edefied the City of God," "selfe-love hath builded the City of the Divell." "This sinne," the philosopher continues, "is so horrible, that it hath converted the Angels into Divels, who made themselves Reprobates by overmuch selfe-love."<sup>11</sup>

The idea was embodied in the formal psychology of the day. For example, Thomas Wright devotes the third chapter of *The Passions of the Minde* to a discussion of "Selfe-love φιλαυτία, or Amorpropius." There he shows how subversive he believed the passion to be to the good in human nature. The following extracts are typical:

Although in the precedent chapter we touched, in part, the roote from whence did spring those spinie braunches of briarie passions, that was the league and confederacie made with senses; yet, for more exact intelligence of their nature, or rather nativitie, I thought good to intreate of selfe-love, the nurse, mother, or rather stepdame of all inordinate affections.<sup>12</sup>

Selfe-love upstarts, and for the affinitie with sense, for the causes alleadged . . . will in no case obey reason, but allured with the baite of pleasure and sensuality, proclaimeth warres & rebellion against prudence, against the love of GOD; in so much this tyrant prevail-eth, that if reason commaund a temperate diet, she will have exquisite and superfluous dishes: if reason will be contented with a meane and decent attire, she will have gorgeous, and above her state and

<sup>11</sup>T[homas] L[odge], *Catharos. Diogenes in his Singularitie* (London, 1591), sig. G3.

<sup>12</sup>Thomas Wright, *The Passions of the Minde* (London, 1601), p. 20.

condition: In summe, from this infected love sprung all the evils, welnie, that pester the world.<sup>19</sup>

By this it appeereth how GOD gave every man an inclination to love himself: yet subordinated to reason: and how, by the pleasure of sensualitie it is growne to such a head, that rather it ruleth reason, than reason ruleth it.<sup>20</sup>

Such a conception of self-love establishes the mood of the play and, despite the pervasive atmosphere of graceful unreality, makes the spirit of the comedy like the severe hortatory temper of formal satire.

As already indicated, the characters who bear the brunt of the author's ridicule are eight formally balanced creatures, four male and four female, each of whom aspires to a favored position in court society. All of these pretenders represent characters persistently ridiculed by the English satirists of the 1590's. The lineage that Baskervill<sup>21</sup> has established for them can be accepted as substantially correct. Hence we need here analyze only one or two of these personifications of social affectation, in order to show, first, that in *Cynthias Revels* Jonson continued to treat characters for whom his English predecessors in formal satire had shown a preference; and, secondly, that even in the masque-like romanticizing of his last act he remembered that his main object was the exposure and deflation of the fools and knaves.

The four male pretenders appear as two associated pairs: Amorphus, the traveler, and his social zany, Asotus; and Hedon, the reveler, and Anaides, who is a crude and extravagant imitator of his friends' pseudo graces. To that extent these gulls are stratified on the bases of their social competence. But the figures moving on the highest social level—that is, the courtly adepts—are not recognizable as men and women. They are clearly abstractions based on familiar Aristotelian ethical conceptions—personifications of ideal conduct rather than human models of correct social behavior. In this picturesque but reactionary dramatic manner, the author contrives to bring mere social follies to the bar of ethical satire.

Since Jonson places these derided characters upon different social levels, he can ridicule them by merely presenting them in realistic encounters with each other. His method is enhanced by the fact

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>20</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>21</sup>*Op. cit.*, pp. 224 ff., *passim*.

that they all seem to belong to a kind of academy organized by the female fops. Their club is an inept imitation of the outmoded courts of love. Social groups which gathered for formal discussions of love and for the inculcation of approved modes of courtesy and courtship apparently existed in the England of Jonson's day. But the forms of polite behavior which they affected had become nothing more than organized exploitation of the gracious old conventions, in the interest of vulgar display and of sensuality.<sup>22</sup> In the silly ceremonies of the "school" over which Moria, the prurient old woman, presides, Jonson satirizes not so much the "precious" etiquette of the courts of love as the perversion of their conventions by base-minded imitators. Such a method of branding the conduct of the fools as subservience to the rules of a cult, instead of spontaneous expression of individual folly, is not that approved by formal satire, but more nearly resembles the devices which Lyly perfected in his court comedies. In *Cynthias Revels* the two literary traditions clearly unite. An examination of some of the representative eccentrics in Jonson's drama will show, however, that their idiosyncrasies, and the methods by which their follies are presented and expelled, are largely a variation of those he had already employed in *Every Man Out of His Humor*.

Amorphus has the best title to social competence of any of the male pretenders. He, like Fastidious Brisk, belongs to the long line of "Castilios."<sup>23</sup> He considers himself the mirror of courtesy—a man completely "sublimated, and refin'de by Travaile." He boasts that his fabulous successes in love<sup>24</sup> while abroad have given him mastery of the arts of courtship. But, when he puts them into practice, he merely struts and minces. Such a boastful pseudo exquisite as he, is not the type of traveler most frequently met in the satiric literature of the 1590's. More common were travelers of the kind exem-

<sup>22</sup>Baskervill (*ibid.*, pp. 219-23) discusses this matter with his usual clarity.

<sup>23</sup>Baskervill (*ibid.*, pp. 264-65) points out certain resemblances between Puntarvolo and Amorphus. He discovers in them similar extravagances in speech and behavior. But he properly recognizes the fundamental differences between the two, the former being devoted to antiquated chivalric customs, the latter affecting the ways of a boastful traveler and complete courtier. Figures similar to Amorphus that appear in earlier English satiric literature have been assembled by Baskervill (pp. 265-67).

<sup>24</sup>For example, he boasts that his "*Optiques* have drunke the spirit of beauty, in some eight score and eightene Princes Courts, where I have resided, and bin there fortunate in the *Amours* of three hundred, fortie, and five Ladies (all nobly discended) whose names I have in Catalogue." (I, iii, sig. C.)

plified by Jaques of *As You Like It*—melancholy fellows, dressed in black like the Florentines and Venetians. These sober habiliments they wore with affected negligence and disarray. While abroad, they had lived licentious lives which had tainted their bodies and corrupted their minds. Consequently, they looked upon everything with jaundiced eyes and regarded even Nature herself as in a state of radical disorder.<sup>28</sup>

Amorphus is not that sort of melancholiac. He is more like another type of traveler who occasionally appears in the works of late-sixteenth-century writers of satire—a booster, who delights in describing the wonders he has seen abroad. He designs his tales as much to reflect glory on himself as to awaken amazement among his auditors. Greene, in *The Defence of Conny catching* (1592), for example, presents a sharper who "openly shadoweth his disguise with the name of a Traveller"<sup>29</sup> and tells of the wonders he has seen in Spain and Venice, of which "he will make a long tale of *La Strado Courtizano*, wher the beautiful Courtizans dwel, discribing their excellency, and what angellical creatures they be and how amorously they wil entertaine strangers."<sup>30</sup> Thus he sets "the young gentlemen's teeth an edge." Such novelties "doth this pipned Bragout boast on, when his only travaile hath been to look on a faire day, from *Dover Clifts* to *Callis*."<sup>31</sup> These lies excite a young spendthrift to choose him as his courier for a trip abroad. The fool gives the conycatcher enough money to pay some preliminary expenses, whereupon the sharper promptly disappears, leaving the poor innocent fleeced. Hall, too, presents a false traveler whose stories are like the "leasings of olde Maundevile"<sup>32</sup> or the adventures with which Othello entranced Desdemona. Davies ridicules a fellow who tells a tall story about the great size of the bridge at Paris.<sup>33</sup> Guilpin records the lies of a "foisting travailer," who says

<sup>28</sup>Cf. Z. S. Fink, "Jaques and the Malcontent Traveler," *Philological Quarterly*, XIV, 237-52.

<sup>29</sup>*The Life and Complete Works in Prose and Verse of Robert Greene*, ed. A. B. Grosart ("The Huth Library"; 15 vols.; London, 1881-86), XI, 72.

<sup>30</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>31</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>32</sup>*Virgidemiarum*, Lib. 4, Satire 6, sig. D8. Another "new-come traveller," who "tells nothing but starke truths," appears in one of Hall's satires. (*Ibid.*, Lib. 6, Satire 1, sig. Gv.)

<sup>33</sup>This fellow swears

" . . . that the bridge at Parris on the Seine,



He hath beene in both the *Indias*, East and West,  
Talkes of *Guiana*, *China*, and the rest.<sup>21</sup>

In the first satire of Rowlands' poem entitled *The Letting of Humours Blood in the Head Vaine* (1600), a fellow appears, resplendent in a nobleman's "cast sute," to explain how much better everything is managed abroad than in England.<sup>22</sup> There is also a boastful traveler, Pseudocheus, in the pre-Shakespearean *Timon*. He brags, in language as extravagant as that of a *miles gloriosus*, of the wonderful experiences which have come to him as he has "pac'd the world about." In particular, he has learned how to woo a maid, and instructs the gull Gelasimus in the impudent employment of this art in his campaign to win Callimela.<sup>23</sup> He, like Amorphus, combines traits of the boastful traveler with those of the expert in courtship. Matheo [Matthew] in *Every Man in His Humor* assumed a relation to Bobadilla [Bobadill] that is similar to Sogliardo's to Shift in *Every Man Out of His Humor*. In respect to clothes alone, Fungoso with like ineptitude took Fastidious Brisk for his model.<sup>24</sup>

Asotus, Amorphus' zany, is essentially a prodigal—a fact that is made unmistakable in the ethical masque, at the end of the play, where he is revealed to be the excess of liberality, or Eucolos. And in his wooing of Argurion he betrays his extravagance by scattering gifts about with profuse hand. The same type of prodigal often appeared in the formal satires, and was perhaps most vividly depicted in the prodigal Zodon, a character in *Micro-Cynicon*. "Mounted aloft on flattering fortunes wings," he indulges in ostentatious extravagance, until he falls into penury and serves the author as an occasion for a moral warning.<sup>25</sup> Hall devotes a short poem to a

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Is of such thicknes, length, and breadth, throughout  
That sixscore arches can it scarce sustaine."

(*Epigrammes and Elegies*. By J. D. and  
C. M., Epigram 37, "In Crassum," sig. C4.)

<sup>21</sup>*Skiaetheia*, Satire 1, sig. C4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>22</sup>Samuel Rowlands, *The Letting of Humours Blood in the Head Vaine* (1600), Satire 1, *passim*.

<sup>23</sup>*Timon, a Play*, ed. Alexander Dyce (The Shakespeare Society; London, 1842), Act I, sc. iv, particularly pp. 14-16; also Act II, sc. i, p. 21. This academic play has been assigned to many dates between 1581 and 1600 (cf. J. Q. Adams, in *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, IX, 510, and G. C. Moore-Smith, in *The Modern Language Review*, III, 143). Baskervill (*op. cit.*, pp. 269-72) notes the resemblances between Amorphus and Pseudocheus.

<sup>24</sup>*Cynthias Revels*, IV, iii, sig. H.

<sup>25</sup>*Micro-Cynicon*, Satire 2 (*The Works of Thomas Middleton*, ed. A. H. Bullen [8 vols.; London, 1885], VIII, 121-22).

kindred sort of spendthrift, the heir of "Villius the wealthy farmer." This fellow had numerous prototypes in the contemporary London, where the easily accumulated money of many fathers among the trading class or landowning farmers was squandered by the crude appetite which their sons developed for vainglorious display.

Asotus' ostentation assumes its most ridiculous form in his eagerness to apply the dogmas of Amorphus on the subject of courtship. He is introduced to his teacher by Criticus, whose comments on the subsequent actions of the pair form the best piece of sustained irony in the play. The moral judge in the scene becomes almost merry over folly. The two pretenders, once introduced to each other, begin elaborately to praise each other's clothes. They show their devotion to the ritual of courtesy by the ceremonious exchange of hats—a generosity which, they explain, serves as a kind of "Hieroglyphick" of their mutual devotion.

This sort of show staged by two pseudo gallants had become a convention of the satiric writings of the time. A scene like it, even to details of the action, forms part of the pre-Shakespearean *Timon*. It dramatizes the first meeting between Pseudocheus and Gelasimus. In view of the difficulty of determining which play was written first, one may accept Baskervill's opinion\* that both of these dramatic encounters were suggested by Greene's conycatcher described above. The important fact for an understanding of *Cynthias Revels* is that Jonson has successfully domiciled a conventional satiric situation within the nicely balanced structure of his new comic genre.

During this scene Criticus is constantly on the stage. His frequent comments on the vanities of the two pretenders maintain in the audience the critical attitude essential for the proper sensing of satire. But by the time that Asotus presents himself to Amorphus for his formal lesson in the graces of courtship," Jonson feels that their follies can be trusted to speak for themselves. Amorphus then uses the direct method of instruction—that is, he impersonates the lady to whom Asotus must pay his addresses. His efforts to be "exotick, and exquisite" at his entrance, in his bearing, and in the literary quality of his discourse, show him to be inept and of incorrigibly middle-class taste. In nothing does he betray himself more completely to

\**Op. cit.*, pp. 268-72. Here the detailed resemblances between the two scenes are carefully enumerated.

"III, v. sigs. F3-G.

Elizabethan playgoers than in his insistence upon calling his lady Lindabrides. She was a character in the interminable Spanish romance, *The Myrroure of Knighthood*, a book apparently devoured by tradesmen, their wives, and other members of the lower middle class. Admiration for the tale would at once betray, to Elizabethans at the theatre, the shoddy grandiloquence of Asotus' notions of courtship." These two characters, then, are, in their essential aspects, like those of *Every Man Out of His Humor*. They both belong to an earlier satiric tradition, and the exposition and revelation of their follies are securely in the control of the critic and judge, the author's alter ego.

The male pretenders that make up the other pair are, like Asotus and Amorphus, representatives of favorite butts of the formal satirists. Hedon, the over-dapper courtier stigmatized by Criticus as a light, voluptuous reveler, is in the tradition of Brisk. However, he is not so much a lowborn fellow awkwardly forcing entrance into a courtly circle as he is an empty-headed gentleman whose display of minor social affectations has become his whole existence." Hedon's associated with Anaides as closely as is Amorphus with Asotus. Anaides'

\*This romance was translated piecemeal into English. The English version of Bk. I, Pt. 1, was printed in 1578 and was the work of Margaret Tyler. However, the lady Lindabrides does not appear until chap. 21 of Bk. I, Pt. 11—a portion of the work translated first in 1585, under the title, *The Second part of the first Booke of the Myrroure of Knighthood: . . . Now Newly Translated out of Spanish into our vulgar tongue* by R. P. Hence Judson's note (ed. of *Cynthia's Revels*, p. 198—a note on III, v, 28) on the immediate vogue of the romance in England is misleading. However, the book was enormously popular during the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The *Short-Title Catalogue* lists twelve separate issues of parts of the work between 1578 and the time at which *Cynthias Revels* had its initial production. The book circulated largely among the half-educated Londoners. Louis B. Wright, in his *Middle-Class Culture in Elizabethan England* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1935), pp. 379-80, gives the work a prominent place in the reading of the Elizabethan citizenry. Sir Thomas Overbury, in his character of a chambermaid, writes the following passage: "She reads *Greenes* works over and over, but is so carried away with the *Myrroure of Knighthood*, she is many times resolv'd to run out of her selfe, and become a Lady Errant." (This character of a chambermaid appeared first in the ninth impression of the work, in 1616 [*Sir Thomas Overbury His Wife. With Addition of many new Elegies upon his untimely and much lamented death. As Also New Newes, and divers more Characters, (never before annexed) written by himselfe and other learned Gentlemen. The ninth impression augmented* (London, 1616), sig. G8].)

\*Part of Mercury's "character" of him reads as follows: "These are his graces: he doth (besides me) keepe a *Barbar*, and a *Monkey*: . . . He loves to have a *Fencer*, a *Pedant*, and a *Musitian* seene in his lodging a mornings. . . . He courts Ladies with how many great Horse he hath rid that morning, or how oft he has done the whole, or the halfe *Pommado* [i.e., vaulting over his horse] in a seven-night before; and sometime venters so far upon the vertue of his Pomander, that he dares tell 'hem, how many shirts he has sweat at *Tennis* that weeke." (II, i, sigs. D<sup>v</sup>-D<sub>2</sub>.)

name indicates the shamelessness of his conduct. Wherever he goes, he carries with him the manners and atmosphere of a tavern. Above all, he despises any indication of intellectual refinement. He is of the line of the haters of true worth who frequently appear in the satires, both prose and poetical.<sup>60</sup> The conventional humours of this precious pair are also explained and exhibited to the usual accompaniment of criticism from the commentators. Their every move is thus revealed as securely under the control of the dramatist's satiric intention.<sup>61</sup>

The ladies are bound together in their academy by consuming sensual curiosity. Argurion is a purely allegorical representation of money, but Moria, Philautia, and Phantaste are clearly determined to enjoy full and various experiences in love.<sup>62</sup> These nymphs, though they later contribute jointly to the establishment of the court-of-love atmosphere which prevails at the end of the play, are, as individuals, different from any characters appearing in poems like *Le Roman de la Rose*. In some of the groups of women in Lyly's court plays Jonson may have found suggestions for this coterie.<sup>63</sup> In particular, four of the women in *Endimion*<sup>64</sup> can be regarded as furnishing a model for Jonson's absurd college of etiquette. Tellus, Semele, Scintilla, and Favilla all represent false ideals of courtly conduct, as opposed to those illustrated by the divine Cynthia, who "governeth all things." Tellus, of the earth earthy and hence a passionate creature,

<sup>60</sup>Baskervill (*op. cit.*, pp. 277-78) calls attention to Anaides' resemblance to Hate-Virtue and Adulation in Lodge's *Wits Miserie*. Donne also turns his scorn and ridicule upon the man who hates Virtue if she be naked and able to comfort no one. (Satire 1, ll. 33-41 [*Poems*, ed. Grierson, I, 146].) Marston, in what is sometimes supposed to be a personal attack on Hall, scorns detractors of religious poetry:

". . . . . O daring hardiment!  
At Bartas' sweet *Semains* rail impudent;  
At Hopkins, Sternhold, and the Scottish King."

(Satire 4, ll. 39-41 [*Works*, ed. Bullen, III, 281].)

<sup>61</sup>In fact, it is the mere appearance of Criticus that stimulates these detractors to the most arrogant display of their quality. The lines of Hedon and Anaides are those which have given the critics most warrant for supposing that in this pair Jonson was defending himself from the attacks of Marston and Dekker. My objections to such identifications have already been amply developed.

<sup>62</sup>In the folio edition the three express clearly their eagerness for amatory adventure (IV, iii).

<sup>63</sup>Mercury and Cupid make it plain to the audience that these women live only in the purlieus of the court. Cupid says: "They are in her [Diana's] Court (*Mercury*) but not as Starres; these never come in the presence of *Cynthia*: . . . These are privately brought in by *Moria* in this licentious time, against her knowledge; and (like so many *Meteors*) will vanish when shee appeares." (II, iv. sig. E3.)

<sup>64</sup>This resemblance has been suggested by Baskervill (*op. cit.*, p. 239).

relies wholly upon the power of her own physical charms, of which she boasts in fantastic language: "Doth not Frankinsence & Myrrhe breath out of my nostrils, and all the sacrifice of the Gods breede in my bowels?"<sup>14</sup> Semele who, unlike Cynthia, inspires love for her person and not for her virtue, is a scornful, spiteful female.<sup>15</sup> Cynthia once calls her a "malepart overthwart"<sup>16</sup>—that is, an insolent, perverse creature. Scintilla and Favilla are sharp-tongued women whose conversations about love immediately degenerate into personal quarrels and backbiting. These four are ridiculous and offensive, by turns, in their efforts to adopt the manners and methods of true courtesy, brought to naught by their subjection to unworthy personal emotions, such as pride, conceit, and scorn, instead of by social inexperience. Hence they are united only through their worship of fashions at court and through the way in which their individual faults of temperament besmirch their innate cultivation. Tellus has an important part to play in manipulating the plot, but the other three appear seldom and briefly. Therefore they have no time to submit to any program of satiric correction. Nor do they form any salon devoted to the practice of refined manners.<sup>17</sup>

The women in *Cynthias Revels* are thus much more effectively organized for the therapeutic of comical satire than is Lyly's group. Moria, as the head of the bastard court, is as unmistakably the antagonist of Cynthia as is Tellus in Lyly's *Endimion*. The duties which an adept would perform with grace and ease she stumbles through with awkwardness, showing, by her continuous babble of an infinite deal of nothing, that she is under tension. Philautia and Phantaste are portraits of contemporary ladies who strive to appear fashionable. The former, who sets the tone of the salon, is almost a personification of self-conceit. "She admires not herselfe for any one particularity, but for all." She is puffed up by her pretty light wit, her dancing, her skill at shuttlecock, and her taste in painting and poetry. Phantaste

<sup>14</sup>*Endimion*, I, ii, 23-24 (*The Complete Works of John Lyly*, ed. R. Warwick Bond [Oxford, 1902], III, 24).

<sup>15</sup>Cynthia says to her, on one occasion, "Belike you cannot speake except you bee spightfull." (IV, iii, 65 [*Works*, III, 60].)

<sup>16</sup>III, i, 17 (*Works*, III, 40).

<sup>17</sup>The older idea, that in these scenes Jonson was ridiculing Lyly's dramatic practice and the discourse in *Euphues*, is no longer given much credence. The affected language of Jonson's courtiers does not really resemble that presented by Lyly as a form of beauty. (Cf. Judson, ed. of *Cynthia's Revels*, p. lxiii.)

represents false wit, or a painful straining for conversational effects. She throws similitudes airily over her shoulder in the hurry of her vivacity, which she thinks irresistible. Yet in endeavoring to play this game of scintillating verbal exchange her invention creaks audibly.<sup>60</sup> She is indeed one of the first of the would-be female wits who appeared in comedy written, in the course of more than a century, for the social classes. She is thus the far-off mother of Millamant in Congreve's *The Way of the World*. Argurion's actions are so clearly devised to illustrate her allegorical significance that she never gives the impression of representing a human being. She is giddy and volatile in all that she does and feels.<sup>61</sup> At the end of her career in the play, she swoons and is carried off the stage in so perilous a condition that the audience is given to understand that she will not recover. In this literal fashion Argurion impersonates spent money. In spite of the filaments of allegory which cling to these characters, they are far more suggestive of life contemporary with Jonson and of realistic art than of courts of love and the poetry devoted to their celebration.

The formal English satirists had not devoted nearly as much of their ridicule to women as to men. The little that intrudes into their work is monotonously directed against one or two faults and foibles. The lust of women, certified by medieval satire and Juvenal, is given first place. Marston furnishes us with the most repulsive details of nymphomania.<sup>62</sup> Hall includes a number of women in his list of those whom he summons to the "Court of Venerie."<sup>63</sup> Donne, in his sixth satire, clearly hints at sensual virtuosity in his description of a young widow's technique of managing her second husband. And Guilpin in his epigrams returns to the subject with tiresome frequency. Some of the prose satirists, like Nashe and like Lyly in his *Euphues*,

<sup>60</sup>Cf. her attempts to characterize Anaides with telling similitudes:

"Pha. Anaides? you talk't of a tune *Philautia*, theres one speakes in a Key: like the opening of some *Iustices* gate, or a *Post-Boyes* horne, as if his voyce fear'd an Arrest for some ill words it should give, and were loath to come forth.

*Phi*. I, and he has a very imperfect face.

*Pha*. Like a squeeze'd *Oreng*e, sower, sower."

(IV, i, sig. G2.)

<sup>61</sup>"A Nymph of a most wandering and giddy disposition, . . . When she comes abroad shee's more loose and scattering then dust, and will fly from place to place, as she were rapt with a whirle-winde. . . . Shee's for any course Employment you wil put upon her, as to be your Procurer or Pandar." (II, iii, sig. E1<sup>r</sup>v.)

<sup>62</sup>*Scourge of Villainy*, Satire 3, ll. 29-33, 121-27 (Works, III, 318, 322).

<sup>63</sup>*Virgidemiarum*, Lib. 4, Satire 1, sigs. B5<sup>r</sup>&v, B6.

bring the vice nearer to that of Jonson's female collegiates by suggesting that sensuality prevails particularly among the ladies of the court<sup>88</sup>—a fact for which the conditions among the gentlemen and ladies in waiting at Queen Elizabeth's court furnished a great deal of evidence.

The attack on women's use of cosmetics was almost as frequent. The English satirists followed the preachers and professional dehorters from vice in regarding this peccadillo as a form of deceit dictated by pride. Guilpin devotes most of his second satire to scoffing at the folly by enumerating the foul ingredients that went into the composition of a lady's make-up and to expressing moral indignation<sup>89</sup> at the fault. The other satirists take a like view toward the inartistic application of cosmetics. Some of them proceed to attack a closely related symptom of pride—a lady's delight to "jet it" in her fine clothes. Marston asserts that the only mind and soul which such a woman possesses have taken up permanent residence in her clothes:

Alas! her soul struts round about her neck;  
Her seat of sense in her rebato set;  
Her intellectual is a feignèd niceness,  
Nothing but clothes and simpering preciseness."

Middleton's third satire derides insolent Superbia and Madam Tiptoes. These creatures live to parade in their bravery and to possess jewels and other sorts of finery. Both are given directions for dramatic action. Superbia, before she tells where she has dined on a certain day, makes a display of herself:

. . . . . Then she wipes her lips,  
Placing both hands upon her whalebone hips,  
Puft up with a round-circling farthingale:  
That done, she 'gins go forward with her tale."

<sup>88</sup>Baskervill (*op. cit.*, p. 281) refers to a relevant passage from *Pierce Penilesse* (1592; sig. G) and *Euphues* (*Works*, I, 319-20).

<sup>89</sup>"And think withall how scoffe-inspiring faces  
From dawbing pencils doe derive their graces:  
Their beauties are most antient Gentlemen,  
Fetch'd from the deaw-figs, hens dung & the beane.

. . . . .  
A painted wench is like a whore-house signe,  
The old new slurred over."

(*Skialetheia*, sigs. C6, C7.)

<sup>90</sup>*Scourge of Villainy*, Satire 7, ll. 176-79 (*Works*, III, 351).

<sup>91</sup>*Micro-Cynicon*, Satire 3 (*Works*, VIII, 124).

It is obvious that very little in the work of these satirists, or in the court comedies of Lyly, was of use to Jonson in arriving at a conception of his four lady amorists and of the group which they form. They were designed to serve as feminine equivalents of the male would-be's and so to effect an artistic balance like that which Jonson evidently admired in Lyly's plays. But life, not literary tradition, furnished him with details with which to vivify these comic puppets.

The *salon* which Moria and her associates constitute provides a stage upon which the most extravagant exhibition of the humours of the light pretenders can be effectively presented. Cordatus, in *Every Man Out of His Humor*, had explained that in a well-constructed comical satire such an ensemble scene should precede the final exposure and deflation of the fools. The catastrophe, he said, best fulfilled both its moral and comic obligations when the gulls "in the flame and height of their Humors" were "laid flat." At an important meeting of the pseudo ladies and gentlemen, they amuse themselves with characteristically fatuous pastimes while they await impatiently the water from the Fountain of Self-love, which Amorphus has recommended. They make exchanges of so-called wit; they listen to silly ditties and sillier analyses of them; and they play an inane game of adjectives. Baskervill suggests that such amusements are dimly reminiscent of court-of-love poetry.<sup>77</sup> In all of these diversions they take naïve delight. As Cupid says to Mercury, "Tut heere be they will swallow any thing."<sup>78</sup>

Each pretender is stimulated, by his association with the others, to exaggerate his folly. For example, Asotus the spendthrift reaches the culmination of his lavishness when he bestows upon the ladies pearls, diamonds, pendants, and other adornments, and promises them "embroydered Gownes, Tyres of any Fashion, Rebatus, Jewels, or Carkanets,"<sup>79</sup> if they but manifest a desire to possess them. Phantaste's delight in his prodigality stimulates the most precious of her figures of speech, "Henceforth you shall be no more *Asotus* to us, but our *Golde-Finch*, and we your Cages."<sup>80</sup> The others become similarly vehement in the expression of their humours. So, when the awaited potion arrives, they are in a condition to swallow it with delirious satisfaction.

<sup>77</sup>Baskervill, *op. cit.*, p. 280.

<sup>78</sup>IV, iii, sig. I.

<sup>79</sup>IV, iii, sig. H4.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*



In the folio the presentation of the occupations of this coterie is greatly extended. Several scenes of the fifth act are there devoted to an elaborate mock duello, fought with four weapons of courtly ceremony—the "bare Accost," the "better Reguard," the "solemnne Adresse," and the "perfect Close." The scene is twofold parody: first, of the duello, and, second, of the approved modes of behavior in courtship. As Baskervill<sup>a</sup> has clearly shown, the *jeux partis* of the courts of love are here burlesqued. Whether or not the conventions were carried over into the fashionable duello of Jonson's day, or whether bourgeois social circles ineptly imitated them, it is impossible to know. Moreover, whether the duel scenes had been written when the quarto was printed can only be conjectured. In any case, they did not form a part of the acting version of the comedy. They are essentially undramatic. Even to an Elizabethan audience their elaborate irrelevance would have seemed tedious and silly. As an extravagant anti-masque designed to enhance the masque to follow, they may have had some dramatic propriety. But they must have painted so exaggerated a picture of the social follies of the newly rich London merchants, and their wives, that they were unrecognizable as satire of a contemporary social situation. In fact, their drag and extravagant fantasy would have engulfed the spirit of both comedy and satire and would thus have obscured the outlines of Jonson's new comic form. Very properly, therefore, the mock dueling was excised from the acting version of his play.

The final scene of this comical satire was necessarily devoted to the deflation of the fools. The proper place for the exposure of the pseudo courtiers was obviously the true and perfect court of Cynthia, or Queen Elizabeth. Jonson dared not present that sacred region realistically. He could put the Queen and her entourage upon the stage only through the intervention of allegory and mythology. Even so, he had some doubts about the propriety of introducing these social "humourists" into the midst of Cynthia's divinely decreed revels. So he took the precaution to provide each with a mask to disguise him as the perfect moral opposite of his glaring imperfection. Then Arete, a female presenter (added, late in the play, to the already large group of commentators), in a speech to Criticus, dis-

<sup>a</sup>*Op. cit.*, pp. 229-30.

sipates whatever doubts may still remain. Cynthia, she says, approves of this procedure:

Who (holding true intelligence, what Follyes  
Had crept into her *Pallace*) she resolv'd,  
Of sports, and Triumphs; under that pretext,  
To have them muster in their Pompe and Fulnesse:  
That so she might more strictly, and to roote,  
Effect the Reformation she intends."<sup>22</sup>

Here, again, Jonson enunciates the familiar principle that the moment when gulls attain the highest point of their fatuity is the time at which their correction can be most effectively initiated.

Arete also enunciates, in figurative language, a philosophical justification for employing Cynthia as the agent of reform. This goddess exerts a supernatural force. Even as the strife of chaos ceased when a light better than that of nature shone upon it, so in Cynthia's presence each fool sheds the eccentricity that had caused disharmony in his personality. Thus he adapts himself to the divine order which the goddess automatically imposes,<sup>23</sup> and in the process becomes a well-organized individual. This idea of moral and social reform is infinitely more sound than that of the snarling, shouting satirists who preceded Jonson. It becomes an expression of noble stoicism. Though philosophically more profound, it does not so easily express itself in comic action as the simpler and more facile type of derision which Jonson employed in the final scenes of *Every Man Out of His Humor*.

The last act depends for its theatrical effectiveness upon Jonson's skill in adapting the conventions of the masque to his satiric purpose. A reader of the tedious folio version of the concluding act gains no idea of the workmanlike quality of the quarto. In the former the masque occupies the greater part of the scenes composing the act. In the latter it expedites the dramatico-satiric business assigned to it, as easily as its elaborate form and the insertion of large doses of flattery of the Queen permit.

<sup>22</sup>IV, vi, sigs. J4<sup>v</sup>-K.

<sup>23</sup>"And as the strife of *Chaos* then did cease,  
When better light then Natures did arrive;  
So, what could never in it selfe agree,  
Forgetteth the eccentricke property,  
And at her sight turnes foorthwith regular."  
(Sig. J4<sup>v</sup>.)

The masque, as Sir Edmund Chambers reminds us,<sup>4</sup> was only incidentally a form of drama. In essence it was a part of an indoor revel—a graceful and decorative dance, or series of dances. Masked or otherwise disguised persons, accompanied by torchbearers and musicians, usually entered the hall and danced before the hosts, after the meaning of their disguises and their intention had been explained by one or more presenters. At the close of their entertainment the maskers invited the guests to dance with them. The revel then conventionally ended in a kind of masked ball.

In the last act of *Cynthias Revels* the author adapts almost all of these conventions to his satiric purpose. This fact is of great interest to students of Jonson, because the play antedates by four years the first of his long series of masques written for the Jacobean court. In the second scene, Cupid in the disguise of Anteros, Love's enemy, presents and interprets the first maskers, who are none other than the four counterfeit ladies disguised as four virgins from the palace of their queen, Perfection. That is, each pretends to be her complete opposite, as Aristotle conceived it in his ethical system. Transposed into the key of social satire, the scene reveals the utter inability of each woman to attain to anything but a travesty of the social grace to which she aspires. In the fourth scene Mercury appears as presenter and interpreter of the second masque. He introduces the four male pretenders disguised as figures representing "the foure Cardinall properties without which the Body of Complement mooveth not."<sup>5</sup>

In the next scene the two masques join; and, while three different figures (strains) are danced, Cupid and Mercury discuss them. Cupid has a comedy toward. He plans to play his old mischievous game by trying to pierce the bosoms of Amorphus and Phantaste with his love darts. But, to his surprise, neither dotes on the other. Neither utters a syllable of love. Each continues to be occupied solely with himself, Amorphus exclaiming, "What need we gaze on *Cynthia*, that have our selfe to admire?"<sup>6</sup> Mercury then explains why they remain impervious to Cupid's arrows: they have all drunk copiously of water fetched from the Fountain of Self-love.

At the moment when the dancers would naturally proceed to

<sup>4</sup>*Elizabethan Stage*, I, 149. Sir Edmund's two chapters on the masque (chaps. 5 and 6 of Vol. I) have proved of great aid to me in composing this section of my work.

<sup>5</sup>V, iv, sig. L.

<sup>6</sup>V, v, sig. L2.

"take out" the spectators, Cynthia interrupts. At first she prepares the audience for the part she is to play in the unmasking of the gulls, by explaining her attitude toward those offenders who push into her court or reach a point near it. To the good, she announces, she is always gracious. Her severity is aroused only by such dreadful breaches of propriety as Actaeon's intrusion into her sacred bower. This reference to Essex' grave indiscretion in thrusting himself into the Queen's presence when she was at her toilet was Jonson's daring bid for royal favor—which she properly resented as impudence.

Cynthia, having thus shown that her sense of justice is always associated with good will, orders the revelers to unmask. When she sees that fools and knaves have forced their way into her presence in the guise of neighbor virtues, she is profoundly shocked. She angrily orders Arete and Criticus to devise immediate punishment for their deceit.

"Th'incurable cut of, the rest reforme."<sup>17</sup>

Arete at once delegates her part in the correction to Criticus, whose transcendent fitness for the task has by this time been tediously attested. His sentence carries the audience off into a rarefied atmosphere of allegory and mythology. He orders the eight intruders first to drop two sacrificial tears apiece upon Niobe's stone, then to repair to the well of Helicon, the waters of which will purge them of their follies. When they have purified themselves in this manner, they are to return to the court and to offer their services to the great Cynthia. After all of them have scrupulously performed these rites, Amorphus and Phantaste recite a palinode which parodies the language of The Litany. Through this mock-religious ceremonial they solemnly renounce for their fellow pretenders the follies which have ridden them to disaster.

To a modern mind such an ending of the play—indeed, the entire last act—seems ineffective, both as satiric exposure and correction and as a finale to the tenuous plot. Yet Jonson must have believed that it clarified and dignified the ethical importance of his social satire. And a courtly Elizabethan audience, thoroughly accustomed to fusing symbolical and literal meanings, would have found their more capacious and flexible imaginations co-operating with the author's intention. To them the allegorical significance and realistic

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, sig. L4<sup>v</sup>.

situation would have enriched each other. To have the pretenders cleansed of their affectations in the very presence of Cynthia was to elevate their reformation into a realm of beatitude. Satire thus becomes an instrument of profound social and individual reform. Through the invocation of Criticus' spirit of lofty stoicism in this atmosphere, the control of errant personal impulses ushers in a brave new world of noble and gracious living.

Jonson's interest in the establishment of a critical temper which would lead the society of his time to the most beneficial reforms evidently grew as he worked at *Cynthias Revels*. That fact is evidence of the serious spirit in which he approached his new literary project. But Jonson's preoccupation with philosophical points of view resulted in his relating this second comical satire less intimately to the actual social conditions of the age than he had done in *Every Man Out of His Humor* and thereby lent immediacy and force to that play. Vain and inept social ambition was, after all, but a secondary and minor manifestation of the fundamental economic maladjustments occurring in England at the time. It threatened only the traditional grace and beauty of courtly society. In defending with such heat so esoteric a form of social organization, Jonson wrote himself down as a sturdy conservative, little disturbed by the serious social suffering which resulted from rising prices and the rapid growth of capitalism. But, granted that the life which he defended was worthy of his whole-hearted support, he established in his lavishly decorated allegory an atmosphere most suitable to the performance of his task. Thus, in his second attempt to create effective dramatic satire, he modified his severity. He elevated harsh comical satire to a sort of court entertainment enriched with all the traditional peculiarities of the masque.

Just because the theatrical externals of *Cynthias Revels* are so different from those of *Every Man Out of His Humor*, the new play shows a modern critic how eager was the experimental spirit which inspired Jonson during these years of his interest in comical satire. One can begin to understand the restless ingenuity with which he sought to reassert in these plays the aversion to specific vices and follies which had animated the writers of banished satire. And one can sympathize with Jonson's determination to discover a form in which he could felicitously dramatize the chief ethical and philosophical values which satire in its most serious moods had always expressed.

## CHAPTER V

### *Poetaster*

Jonson's third comical satire, *Poetaster*, was performed in 1601, not more than four or five months after the production of *Cynthia's Revels*.<sup>1</sup> At least parts of it, by the author's own confession, were dictated by his determination to answer the persistent attacks of his professional rivals. "Base Detractors, and illiterate Apes," he cries—" 'Gainst these, have we put on this forc't defense." In the "apologeticall Dialogue," first printed in the folio of 1616, "which was only once spoken upon the stage," and all the answers I ever gave, to sundry impotent libells then cast out (and some yet remayning) against me, and this Play," the author expands his explanation of the inception of the comedy. For three years, he says, these hostile poetasters had provoked him on every stage, until, wearied with their attacks, he unwillingly wrote a defense.<sup>2</sup> As a matter of fact, Jonson evidently got wind of the planned appearance of Marston and Dekker's *Satiro-mastix* and, by working for fifteen weeks<sup>3</sup> with speed unusual for him, anticipated the dramatic satire of his opponents, and disordered the plans of the Chamberlain's Company by having *Poetaster* acted in the latter half of the year 1601, by the children of Queen Elizabeth's Chapel, some time before the rival company was ready to produce *Satiro-mastix*.

These statements of Jonson have given the critics warrant for regarding the drama almost exclusively as a play devised to deride

<sup>1</sup>Herford and Simpson, *Jonson*, I, 415, and Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, III, 366.

<sup>2</sup>*Poetaster or The Arraignment: As it hath beene sundry times privately acted in the Blacke Friers, by the children of her Majesties Chappell. Composed, by Ben. Jonson* (Londón, 1602), Prologue, sig. A3.

<sup>3</sup>By December 21, 1601, when *Poetaster* was entered on the *Stationers' Register*, the Dialogue had been composed, but not yet suffered to be spoken or to be set up in type." (*Poetaster*, ed. Herbert S. Mallory ["Yale Studies in English," XXVII; New York, 1905], p. 235.)

<sup>4</sup>"To the Reader," ll. 3-6. (Herford and Simpson, *op. cit.*, IV, 317.)

<sup>5</sup>See above, p. 85, n. 3.

<sup>6</sup>These fifteen weeks probably began after the production of *Cynthia's Revels*, but not necessarily immediately after. This took place no later than March, 1600/1601. *Poetaster* would thus have been ready for production sometime in the summer of 1601. Cf. Small, *Stage-Quarrel*, p. 25.

and humiliate Dekker and Marston, in particular. Crispinus was immediately identified as Marston, Demetrius as Dekker, and Horace as Jonson, and critical attention has been largely devoted to the nature of the personal lampoon and the light it throws upon the history of the so-called poetomachia.<sup>7</sup> But the business of the play is much more comprehensive than mere personal attack and passionate self-justification. The major effort of Jonson's imagination is devoted to a reconstruction of one phase of the patrician life of Augustan Rome. Under cover of that historical fiction, he attacks in his orthodox satirical manner the dissolute society of his own age. To the profligate ideals of the Elizabethan upper class, not only the social pretenders but also the inferior authors of the day are made to seem subservient. Among these sycophantic writers appear Crispinus and Demetrius, who, some of the time, certainly stand for Marston and Dekker, respectively.

This relation of personal ridicule to the more general social and ethical satire in *Poetaster*, if properly understood, reveals a play of larger scope than the critics have recognized and a dramatic structure wrought with far greater care. Approached as a hastily constructed document in the stage quarrel, the comedy has inevitably seemed to lack coherence, to be in fact a mere collection of disjointed elements.<sup>8</sup> Herford and Simpson refer to "its hurried and disorderly composition." Castelain gives more extended expression to the conventional view:

Une reconstitution plus ou moins exacte de la vie d'Ovide; une traduction ou, si l'on préfère, une adaptation de deux Satires d'Horace; quelques scènes de mœurs bourgeoises qui n'ont rien de particulièrement romain; un personnage bouffon, qui ressemble beaucoup à un

<sup>7</sup>The earlier critics believed they were able to identify many more of the play's characters with contemporaries of Jonson. Fleay (*Biographical Chronicle*) was the foremost of these literal-minded interpreters. Penniman (*War of the Theatres*, chap. 8) is also lavish with identifications. Almost without exception they are farfetched. What is worse, they betray a misconception of the nature of *Poetaster*. One further identification, however, does deserve a brief notice. Dekker asserts, indirectly to be sure, that *Tucca* represents a now utterly obscure Captain Hannam: "I wonder what language *Tucca* would have spoke, if honest Capten *Hannam* had bin borne without a tongue? Ist not as lawfull then for mee to imitate *Horace*, as *Horace Hannam*?" (*Satiro-mastix*, "To the World," sig. A3v.) Because we must forever remain in complete ignorance of Captain Hannam, Dekker's allegation, if true, can have no significance for us.

<sup>8</sup>The best treatment of the drama as a part of the poetomachia appears in Small's *Stage-Quarrel*, pp. 25-58.

Anglais; un dénouement burlesque dont la bouffonnerie aristophanesque est assez répugnante; le tout entremêlé de beaux vers, et farci d'allusions littéraires, j'entends d'attaques personnelles contre tel ou tel, voilà en somme un mélange plus abondant que savoureux.<sup>9</sup>

It would be strange if Jonson, in his third effort to compose his new form of "Comicall Satyre," achieved no closer dramatic unity than that credited to him by such critics. The most fervid determination to lampoon his professional detractors could hardly have led him to ignore all the normal demands of an audience; and a pedantic eagerness to present a scholarly, accurate picture of Augustan literary circles could scarcely have obliterated, even for the moment, all his skill in stagecraft. He takes pains to assure his audience that in *Poetaster* he remains faithful to the principles of satiric art which he had repeatedly enunciated. He explains, again, the proper relation between personal and social satire. He denies categorically the accusation that he has

. . . . . tax'd  
The Law, and Lawyers; Captaines; and the Players  
By their particular names.<sup>10</sup>

He admits that the comedy was written to mock some pestilent fellows whom he scorns to name; but he accomplishes his purpose by sparing the persons, in order to "speake" the vices:

And therefore chose AUGUSTUS CAESARS times,  
When wit, and artes were at their height in *Rome*,  
To shew that VIRGIL, HORACE, and the rest  
Of those great master-spirits did not want  
Detractors, then, or practisers against them:  
And by this line (although no *paralel*)  
I hop'd at last they would sit downe, and blush.<sup>11</sup>

Some critics assume that, whenever an Elizabethan dramatist protests his innocence of lampoon, he is most guilty. However, in the case of *Poetaster*, the conduct of the action and the depiction of the characters faithfully conform to the principles laid down in the above lines.

Jonson, as will appear, did not ignore the experience that he had gained in striving to make *Every Man Out of His Humor* and

<sup>9</sup>Castelain, *Jonson*, p. 279.

<sup>10</sup>"Apologetically Dialogue," ll. 81-83.

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 101-7.



*Cynthias Revels* effective satiric comedies. He had too great a respect for orthodox critical theory to distort the accepted forms of either satire or comedy, in order to disgorge personal animosities or to produce an immediately effective stage play. However, he made his problem in *Poetaster* unusually difficult by adding the role of antiquarian to the already complicated duties he had assumed in order to compose a comical satire.

It is impossible, now, to say definitely what the initial impulse was that led Jonson to the composition of this play. It may have been the desire to mock Dekker and Marston. But, unwilling to ridicule them crassly, in the milieu to which they actually belonged, he gave them fictitious characters and placed them in a time of remote antiquity. If such was the course of his artistic invention, his reason for following it was different from that which led Massinger to rewrite *Believe As You List*, for the latter was acting under the compulsion of the Master of the Revels, Sir Henry Herbert. Massinger's play in its original form (1630) treated the dangerous matter of the deposition of Sebastian, King of Portugal—a comparatively recent event. In his forced revision, he substituted for Sebastian and the Catholic Hermit, the Syrian king, Antiochus, and a Stoic Philosopher.<sup>12</sup> The kind of transformation of historic reality which Massinger made at the command of the Master of the Revels, Jonson effected in order to emancipate even personal satire from the crude directness of lampoon and abuse. Whether Jonson began with his Roman setting, or considered it at first as merely a way of masking his attack on pestilent antagonists, it is clear that he became interested in painting an accurate picture of the manners, temper, and taste of Augustan society, and chose to emphasize the features that resembled the pageant of London life as it was displayed to him in 1601. The dramatization of these manifold interests of the playwright resulted in a complicated satiric edifice. Yet, once its structural principles are grasped, it is seen to possess a much firmer intellectual and dramatic unity than commentators, absorbed in Jonson's personal quarrels, have been able to discern.

When the curtains of the inner stage are drawn aside, Ovid is revealed in the act of poetical composition. This "discovery," at

<sup>12</sup>This matter is treated fully by Professor C. J. Sisson, in the Malone Society reprint of *Believe as You List* (Oxford, 1927), q.v.

the very beginning of the play, probably gave the audience a false lead. Almost every spectator would inevitably infer that the laboring poet before them was the poetaster with whom the comedy was to be concerned. But, in spite of the mistaken impression thus conveyed, Ovid, as occupant of the central position in the main plot, deserved the immediate prominence thereby accorded him. He and Julia set the tone of the dissolute courtly society whose influence permeates every portion of the drama. Besides, Ovid's poems were the fountain-head of the libertine ideal of sexual relationships, and, as that idea had debased many Elizabethan courtiers, Jonson saw in the corrupt world in which Ovid shone a prefigurement of the profligate court of his own day. Ovid's *Amores* and *De Arte Amandi* formed the Book of Hours of those who considered the art of love the whole duty of man and the sole interest of woman. Both the erotic poetry of England during the 1590's, and the satire of lust during the same decade, suggest that many persons of high social position were frankly expressing, in their lives, Ovid's philosophy of love. Nashe, in his *Anatomie of Absurditie*, apparently recognizing this dangerous influence of the Roman poet, suggests that Ovid's exile and disgrace might be used to point a salutary moral lesson.<sup>18</sup> Jonson similarly recognized Ovid's effectiveness for the related purpose of his satiric comedy.

The dangerous eroticism rampant in Ovid's group of socially elect is shown to contaminate the class directly beneath it. Chloe, the citizen's wife, and, to a lesser degree, her husband Albius, ineptly seek to attain the graces and vices of their dissolute social superiors. These pretenders are so skilfully manipulated by the dramatist that they not only appear ridiculous in themselves, but also cast oblique light upon the perverse attitudes of the social exquisites. Even Tucca plays a part in reinforcing this atmosphere. Though by dramatic type he is a braggart captain, his factitious and vulgar heartiness, expressed in a vocabulary learned in the stews, makes him one of the most virile and independent of Jonson's creations. His name

<sup>18</sup>"When as lust is the tractate of so many leaves, and love passions the lavish dispendence of so much paper, I must needs sende such idle wits to shrift to the vicar of S. Fooles, who in steede of a worser may be such a Gothamists ghostly Father. Might Ovids exile admonish such Idlebies to betake them to a new trade, the Presse should be farre better employed, . . ." (*The Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. R. B. McKerrow [London], I [1904], 10 [quoted Baskervill, *English Elements*, p. 294, in a slightly different connection].)

is derived from a character in Guilpin's *Skialetheia* and, as in the case of his prototype, the key to his nature is furtive lasciviousness," but his underived vitality is expended in advancing the dramatic business of *Poetaster*.

The scene in which Ovid and his friends, associated with all the pretenders, sacrilegiously imitate a council of the gods, particularly their scandalous freedom to pursue amorous adventure, serves as an effective revelation of the dangerously immoral foundation upon which the seductive graces of their society are based. To have the catastrophe terminate this aphrodisiac masquerade is effective dramatic construction. The Emperor's scandalized irruption into their midst and his irate banishment of Ovid form appropriate dramatic consequences of the sins of their mode of living and put into language of the theatre Jonson's moral indignation.

The two pretenders to poetry, Crispinus and Demetrius, are presented as compliant with the ideals of these degenerates. Such servility has prostituted their art and perverted the poet's sacred social function. This, in their hearts, they know. Their hatred of Horace is due to their secret envy of one who holds his art high above contamination by social folly and sensuality.

Even the actors have capitulated to the spell of libertine ideas. Histrio advertises the bawdry that his company presents at its theatre across the river. For players thus eager to tickle itching ears, Crispinus is the appropriate poet and playwright. Hence the purge administered to him and the correction offered his fellow, Demetrius, are not merely effective blows which Jonson rains upon two of his enemies, completely stripped, for the moment, of their Roman disguises: they also represent the sorely needed purification of all writers who allow

<sup>14</sup>The following passage was first brought into connection with Jonson's character by Small (*op. cit.*, p. 26 n.):

"A third that falls more roundly to his worke,  
Meaning to move her were she Jew or Turke:  
Writes perfect *Cat and fiddle*, wantonly,  
Tickling her thoughts with masking bawdry:  
Which read to Captaine *Tucca*, he doth sweare,  
And scratch, and sweare, and scratch to heare  
His owne discourse discours'd: and *by the Lord*  
*It's passing good: oh good!* at every word:  
When his Cock-sparrow thoughts to itch begin,  
He with a shrug sweares't a most sweet sinne."

(*Skialetheia*, "Satyre Preludium," sig. B8v.)

their art to subserve the purposes of a trivial and sensual society. Once cleansed, these playwrights no longer envy Horace but repent of their failure to recognize him as suited, by independence and moral sanity, to be the poet of a great monarch and his court.

Such is the framework of the play. A closer examination should confirm the truth of the above conception of its dramatic structure. Jonson chose Ovid to serve as the principal figure in his picture of the life and times of Augustus Caesar. This poet is neither one of Horace's detractors nor, in the playwright's opinion, one of the great master spirits who made the age golden. If Jonson's object had been to employ the Roman world of Augustus solely, or even primarily, as a means of discomfiting his traducers, his early introduction of Ovid would have been a technical blunder.<sup>18</sup> But, granted that the aim is to establish in the first scene of the play the tone of an entire society at once cultivated and libertine, Jonson's immediate presentation of the poet was dramatically justified. Elizabethans regarded Ovid as the "Amarous Scholemaister," the "grand-maister of wantonnesse."<sup>19</sup> As soon as the audience realized that he was not to be the poetaster, it could be trusted to catch the significance of his role.

Ovid's encounter with his father, as Baskervill indicates,<sup>20</sup> though constructed partly of details derived from the classics, effectively reflects familiar aspects of English life. The son who goes to a city university and arouses the ire of his father by studying, instead of law, the art of love, was also a commonplace of *comedia erudita* from the time of the first performance of Ariosto's *I Suppositi*, in 1509. Jonson had already adumbrated the situation in the relations of Lorenzo junior with his father. In Ovid's conflict with his parent, Sir Marcus Ovid, and in his presumptuous love for the Emperor's daughter Julia, he reveals the part he is to play in the plot. The complete surrender of his intellect and his emotions to love, and to

<sup>18</sup>Herford and Simpson take this view. They regard "Jonson's Ovid-romance" as "uninteresting and even grotesque in itself"—"a mere disturbing incongruity." (*Op. cit.*, I, 431.)

<sup>19</sup>These two descriptive phrases are typical of those universally applied to Ovid in the age of Elizabeth. Cf. C. B. Cooper, *Some Elizabethan Opinions of the Poetry and Character of Ovid* (University of Chicago dissertation; Menasha, Wis., 1914), *passim*. "The Amorous Scholemaister" is found in Stephen Gosson's *The Schoole of Abuse* (1579), ed. Edward Arber (London, 1869), p. 29; "that grand-maister of wantonnesse," in Henry Crosse's *Vertue's Commonwealth* (1603), ed. A. B. Grosart ("Occasional Issues," Vol. XVIII [Manchester, 1878]), p. 124.

<sup>20</sup>*Op. cit.*, pp. 28 ff., *passim*.

the art which it dictates, discloses him at once as one of passion's slaves. His defense of poetry, expressed in a translation of one of the elegies of the *Amores*,<sup>19</sup> is put into the conventional terms of Art's triumph over Time. But, be it noted, Ovid commits the immortality of his work solely to the keeping of unhappy lovers.<sup>20</sup> Compared to the vehement Philistinism of his conventionally domineering father, and its rotund echo in the mouth of the toadying Captain Tucca, his opinions are sympathetic. Ovid is set at the opposite pole from the pretenders in the social world the tone of which he establishes. As artistic or social virtuoso he is without blemish. His obtuseness appears only in his relation to ethical conduct. His apostrophe to poetry, beginning

O sacred *Poësy*, thou spirit of *Arts*,  
The soule of *Science*, and the Queene of Soules,<sup>20</sup>

is a noble and genuine tribute eloquently phrased. But in the very next scene he betrays himself as eager to dedicate these "high Raptures of a happy soule" entirely to the service of profane and almost sacrilegious love:

. . . . . I'll study,  
The Law, and Arte of sacred *Julias* Love:  
All other objects will but Abjects prove.<sup>21</sup>

In such a scene, Ovid the romantic hero becomes Ovid the libertine, and so a vehicle of ethical warning. The contamination of one of these aspects of Ovid by the other would have seemed natural to the audiences who saw the play. The two lay side by side in the culture of the period. Jonson has hitherto written nothing related to the popular romantic comedy of the last decade of the sixteenth century. In *Poetaster* he tentatively presents a picture of a poet whose literary achievement and whose career made him, in many respects, an ideal romantic figure. But as, in fact and in tradition, his love grew to licentiousness, so in the play Ovid the noble lover is now transformed into a slave of passion. He is therefore afflicted with both an artistic and an ethical form of *hybris* for which he must clearly suffer retribution. Thus, satire emerges half-unwillingly from romance. Such a metamorphosis of Ovid is interesting as a clear

<sup>19</sup>I. xv.

<sup>20</sup>"atque ita sollicito multus amante legar!" (*Ibid.*, l. 38.)

<sup>21</sup>I, ii, sig. B3.

<sup>22</sup>I, iii, sig. B4v.

indication that the unity established for the play lies less in a closely-knit, simply-moving action than in a succession of intellectual attitudes that were adjacent in the minds that determined the nature of Renaissance culture.

Ovid and his sophisticated friends are able to express the dissolute philosophy of the *Amores* in a mode of social amenity and individual grace. Love thereby rendered beautiful by sophisticated art is regarded as palliating every sin committed in its name. Only those who have discovered that liberating truth have been emancipated from *rusticitas*, to use Ovid's own term. The social adepts accept such a philosophy nonchalantly; but not so the citizens, and their wives, who strive to intrude into this charmed society. They form a group of pretenders like those who appeared in Jonson's earlier comedies, yet domiciled within the structure of *Poetaster*. To these would-be's we are next introduced.

Chloe, the wife of the citizen Albius, is the self-anointed queen of the bourgeois coterie. She is thoroughly acquainted with the precepts of the dissolute courtiers; but, when she puts these laws of love into practice, she does so with crude eagerness instead of with Ovid's imagination and grace. One would suppose that she had been taught by the most repulsive creature in all the *Amores*, the bawd Dipsas. In urging Corinna to grant the last favor to a rich young seducer, the old woman reduces the art of love to the basest vulgarity. She tells her mistress that, far back in the reign of Tatus, the coarse Sabine woman may have been satisfied with one man, but such erotic parsimony is no longer feasible in Aeneas' city, where his Venus now rules a society organized so that beautiful women may enjoy themselves. Nowadays, everyone realizes that the only chaste woman is she who has never been asked—or, if a woman is not completely countrified, she will do the asking herself.<sup>22</sup> Later in Jonson's comedy, Chloe is given her chance to show how well she has learned Dipsas' lesson.

However, her milieu must first be presented and her character

<sup>22</sup>This is a paraphrase of *Amores* I. viii. 39-44:

"forsitan inmundae Tatio regnante Sabinae  
noluerint habiles pluribus esse viris;  
nunc Mars externis animos exercet in armis,  
at Venus Aeneae regnat in urbe sui.  
ludunt formosae; casta est, quam nemo rogavit—  
aut, si rusticitas non vetat, ipsa rogat."

revealed through her social connections. The relation between her husband Albius and herself is, in some respects, like that which existed between Deliro and Fallace in *Every Man Out of His Humor*.<sup>22</sup> Albius is an uxorious old man, yet he cannot resist giving his second wife instructions about the proper way of entertaining ladies and gentlemen. Chloe is shrilly contemptuous of his presumption in attempting to teach her in such matters. Has she not married him, mean though his social position is, so that she might acquire wealth and sovereignty?

I take it highly in snuffe, to learne how to Entertaine Gentlefolkes, of you, at these yeeres, I faith: Alas man; there was not a Gentleman came to your house i' your tother Wives time, I hope? nor a Lady? nor Musique? nor Masques.<sup>23</sup>

She pretends to resent even his presence, for she has learned that this is the attitude which the fashions of worshipful society dictate.

For *Vulcanes* sake, breath some where else; in troth you overcome our Perfumes exceedingly, you are to predominant.<sup>24</sup>

Albius, thinking such vulgarity proof that Chloe is "the most best, true, faeminine wit in *Rome*," is stimulated by it to fulsome terms of bourgeois endearment.

Crispinus is next introduced as a follower in Chloe's train. Appealing to her as one fatuous pretender to another, he proves to her satisfaction that he is a gentleman born, by describing his coat of arms. It constitutes a poor pun on his name, "*Cri-spinas*," for it is "a Face crying in chiefe; and beneath it a bloody Toe, betweene three Thornes [i.e. spinas] *Pungent*."<sup>25</sup> The coat of arms, indisputably his own, combined with the fact that he is "borne upon little legges," convinces Chloe of his gentility, and she accepts as gospel the instructions which he gives her about the proper way to behave in the company of Ovid, Julia, and the other gallants who troop in.

Crispinus, as he appears in this his first scene, is simply one of the group of pseudo exquisites. He reveals nothing that would lead an audience to identify him with Marston, unless it be his thin legs and the red wig and red beard which the actor playing the role apparently wore.<sup>26</sup> Since we know nothing about Marston's personal appearance,

<sup>22</sup>Cf. Baskervill, *op. cit.*, p. 291.

<sup>23</sup>III, i, sig. C1v.

<sup>24</sup>II, i, sig. C1.

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, sig. C2.

<sup>26</sup>Small (*op. cit.*, p. 41) marshals the evidence which makes the red wig and beard probable.

however, such details of make-up must remain merely accessories designed to endow the character with a farcically comic appearance.

The next scene presents Chloe's supper party. Its object is to contrast the pretenders, both social and literary, with the authentic exquisites and men of letters. The conversation which the real poets carry on about love, and their glorification of the love melancholy of Propertius as "the perfect'st love, lives after death," arouse the admiring wonder of Chloe. She will incontinently have a poet of her own, exactly like these laureates of love. She asks Crispinus whether the Emperor cannot make a poet out of her husband. "No Ladie," the poetaster answers, "'tis Love, and Beauty make *Poets*: & since you like *Poets* so well, your Love, and Beauties shall make me a *Poet*. . . . I, and a better than these: I would be sorry else."<sup>28</sup> In order to display his talents to the entire party, he induces Chloe to "intreat the Ladies, to intreat me to sing," and then warbles one staff of a ditty of his own composition. A second staff is finally sung by "*Hermogenes*; as humorous as a *Poet* though he is a *Musitian*." In introducing him, Jonson the scholar furnished Jonson the satirist with a figure who could serve as an effective vehicle for incidental social satire. Tigellius, in one of Horace's satires, is made to display the musician's characteristic disinclination to perform when invited and his eagerness, once he has begun, to continue longer than his audience desires.<sup>29</sup> In the play, his determination to outshine Crispinus makes him belie his repeated "'cannot sing," "'will not sing." After he has recited his verse, which is a wretched travesty of the love poetry of the gallants, he is with difficulty restrained from performing indefinitely. In the meantime, the spirit of imitation so possesses Crispinus to embark upon his poetical career, that he does not stay for Albius' banquet. Instead, he rushes off with the intention of wheedling a poet's gown out of some pawnbroker and of bespeaking a garland for his crown.

This scene is an important one for the play and for the development of Jonson's technique. Here he sets the pseudo poet in juxtaposition to the true one. Here he shows Crispinus spying upon the intellectual

<sup>28</sup>II, ii, sig. C4.

<sup>29</sup>*Satires* I. iii. 1-3:

"Omnibus hoc vitium est cantoribus, inter amicos  
ut numquam inducant animum cantare rogati,  
injussi numquam desistant."



manners of the poets so that he can ape them,"<sup>80</sup> just as his gulls habitually spy upon the fashions of the gallants. Crispinus, to be sure, approximates the type of the impecunious pretender who affects poetry because he regards it as triumphant evidence of social competence. Baskervill pointed out<sup>81</sup> that the name Crispinus would suggest to a good Latinist like Jonson both an affected gallant and a verbose poet. A character of the first sort is so named in Juvenal's first satire,<sup>82</sup> and one of the second sort in a satire of Horace;<sup>83</sup> and a babbler of virtue and a man who is *ineptus* and *stultus* is also called Crispinus.<sup>84</sup> Jonson's character has thus a kind of hereditary right to arrive at pseudo poetry by way of pseudo gallantry. In effecting this relationship, Jonson fuses social and literary satire better than he had in earlier comedies, and also sustains the ridicule more successfully. Such a fusion is of real importance for the development of satiric comedy. It enabled the literary satire to seem less a mere incrustation of erudition and pedantry upon the alien surface of the drama.

In the first part of the third act, Crispinus appears again—now in the likeness of a bore. The scene is a greatly extended version of Horace's famous encounter with a similar creature.<sup>85</sup> Its purpose does not seem to be the introduction of Jonson in person through the first entry of his Horace. The poet's nervous, embarrassed efforts to escape the bore are practically identical with those used by Horace in his little mime. But Horace's actions in *Poetaster* form no true picture of what Jonson's own bluff, downright methods of extricating himself from a similar situation would have been. The purpose of

<sup>80</sup>"*Chl.* Have you markt every thinge, *Crispinus*?

*Cri.* Every thing, I, warrant you."

(II, ii, sig. C4.)

<sup>81</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 306, n. 2.

<sup>82</sup>"cum pars Niliacae plebis, cum verna Canopi  
Crispinus Tyrias umero revocante lacernas  
ventilet aestivum digitis sudantibus aurum,  
nec sufferre queat majoris pondera gemmae,  
difficile est saturam non scribere."

(*Satires* I. 26-30.)

<sup>83</sup>" . . . . . ecce,  
Crispinus minimo me provocat: 'accipe, si vis,  
accipiam tabulas: detur nobis locus, hora,  
custodes; videamus uter plus scribere possit.'"

(*Satires* I. iv. 13-16.)

<sup>84</sup>Cf. *ibid.*, i. 120-21; iii. 139-40.

<sup>85</sup>*Ibid.*, ix.

the scene is, rather, to present a piece of Roman intellectual life that his audience would immediately recognize and so be convinced that his Horace belonged definitely in that historical milieu.

The Roman Horace's tiresome acquaintance, it will be remembered, catalogued his poetical powers, along with his skill in dancing and singing, as social accomplishments.<sup>20</sup> Crispinus similarly regards his literary fecundity as a social asset of the same sort as any exhibition of trivial mannerisms. He says:

I would faine see which of these [i.e., Varius, Virgil, or Tibullus] could pen more Verses in a day, or with more facility then I; or that could court his Mistres, kisse her hand, make better sport with her Fanne, or her Dogge."

Cruellest insult to Horace is Crispinus' belief that his verse is just the sort Horace composes:

Nay, we are newe turn'd *Poet* too, which is more; and a *Satyr*ist too, which is more then that: I write just in thy vaine, I. I am for your *Odes* or your *Sermons*, or any thing indeede; . . . we are a pretty *Stoicke*, too."<sup>21</sup>

To prove the similarity he recites a poem of his own that had been inspired by the sight of a fine, sweet, little velvet cap poised on the head of a jeweler's wife. He explains the rhetorical virtues of this effusion by employing in his exegesis such jaw-breaking words as "*Paranomasy*" and "*Agnomination*." Finally, he begs Horace to introduce him to Mecaenas. Such impudence stings the poet out of his patience and he makes a harsh reply:

. . . . . Sir, your Silkenesse  
Clearely mistakes Mecaenas, and his house;  
To thinke, there breaths a Spirit beneath his Roofe,  
Subject unto those poore affections

"Incipit ille:  
'si bene me novi, non Viscum pluris amicum,  
non Varium facies: nam quis me scribere pluris  
aut citius possit versus? quis membra movere  
mollius? inuideat quod et Hermogenes, ego canto.' "

(*Ibid.*, ll. 21-25.)

<sup>20</sup>III, i, sig. D4v.

<sup>21</sup>*Ibid.*, sig. D2v. This last characteristic is commonly thought to be a flourish of the poet's powers of invention. However, worth remembering is Marston's suggestion, particularly in his character of Feliche (as presented in the Induction to *The First Part of Antonio and Mellida*), that the true stoic content was the emotional state to stimulate the most just and effective satiric attitude.

Of under-mining *Envy*, and *Detraction*,  
Moodes, onely proper to base groveling minds."<sup>2</sup>

At this sudden stroke, the sleek gull and ignorant social pretender becomes a representative of much more sinister forces, and the emotional ground is laid for Jonson's personal attack, which he clearly persuades himself is a form of ethical satire. But a moment later Crispinus reappears in the role of gull, when arrested at the suit of Minos, the apothecary, for nonpayment of a bill for sweetmeats.

Crispinus' release is secured by Tucca, the swaggerer, who alternately bribes the lictor and threatens him with his sword. But when the officer shows a touch of anger, Tucca changes his attitude to boisterous friendliness, and offers to be surety for the debt. What is more, in the future he will take his trade to Minos' shop and buy eringos, his favorite aphrodisiac, there. Thus he seeks to end the incident in an atmosphere of clamorous good will, and enables Jonson to restore to the atmosphere of comedy a situation that smells a little of the antiquarian's lamp.

Satire of the actors and their plays is cleverly introduced into this scene, dominated by Tucca. He noisily berates a histrio, who tries to slink by unnoticed, for not showing him proper deference. Having gained the player's frightened attention, he attempts to sweep Crispinus into a position of author for the fellow's company and to secure for him on the spot a retaining fee of forty shillings. The actors, too, can be certain of Tucca's patronage, if they will promise to present good bawdy plays. "But they say, you ha' nothing but *Humours*, *Revels*, and *Satyres*, that girde, and fart at the time, you slave." In other words, they present only such work as Ben Jonson was then writing. But Histrio assures Tucca that he is thinking of the playhouse on the wrong side of the river, because in his theatre "Wee have as much Ribaldry in our Plaies, as can bee, as you would wish, Captaine." Tucca is now convinced that the company's dramas will be to his taste and he has the boy actors in the player's train recite lines written in the various bombastic styles which he admires. The passages spouted are from *The Spanish Tragedy*, *The Second Part of the History of Antonio and Mellida*, and other works of fustian, the lines of which Jonson has deliberately rearranged to heighten their absurdity. Finally, he induces the boy to present with

<sup>2</sup>III, i, sigs. E1v-E2r.

appropriate impersonation his particular favorite, the Moor's speech from *The Battle of Alcazar*.<sup>40</sup>

His thirst for beauty thus quenched, Tucca spies a miserable figure in a decayed doublet. He, it seems, is "one *Demetrius*, a *dresser* of Playes about the towne, . . . we have hir'd him to abuse *Horace*, and bring him in, in a Play, with all his Gallants." This project they believe will earn them "a huge deale of money," of which they have desperate need. Tucca offers them Crispinus, his Parnassus (as he persists in naming him), to help execute the plan, provided Demetrius can do the job impudently enough. Histrio is certain on that point:

O, I warrant you, Capitaine: and spitefully inough too; he ha's one of the most overflowing villanous wits, in *Rome*. He will slander any man that breathes; If he disgust him.<sup>41</sup>

Thereby satisfied, Tucca, after flinging a filthy insult at Horace, suggested by the popular connection of Satire with the satyr play—"Hang him fusty *Satyre*; he smells all Goate"—exits, arm in arm with Crispinus, each eager to give the other a kind of preview of his mistress.

Histrio is obviously meant to suggest a member of the rival Chamberlain's Company (but clearly no particular person, certainly neither Henslowe nor Shakespeare) and their repertory at the Globe Theatre.<sup>42</sup> It was this company that had retained Dekker and Marston to compose the play which, as *Satiro-mastix*, they presented there in the autumn of 1601. However, the references to the particular situation are not obvious and heavy-footed enough to divorce Histrio from his role as representative of actors and producers willing to stoop to obscenity and personal vilification for financial rewards.<sup>43</sup>

The third act, it must be admitted, has carried the audience far from Ovid's world of amorous gallantry and from the pretenders seeking entrance to it—from the simpletons to whom Crispinus has

<sup>40</sup>II, iii, 1-11 (quoted Mallory, ed. of *Poetaster*, p. 201).

<sup>41</sup>III, iv, sig. F4.

<sup>42</sup>This view is well presented by Small, *op. cit.*, pp. 57-58, and accepted, with minor corrections, by Mallory, ed. of *Poetaster*, pp. lvi-lxi.

<sup>43</sup>The relationship of this satire of a company of actors to a similar attack in *Histrio-mastix*, a version of which, revised by Marston, was produced by the Paul's boys in August, 1599 (see Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, IV, 17-19), has been admirably appraised by Baskerville (*op. cit.*, pp. 298-99). The most interesting point that emerges from his discussion is that the authors probably intended the character of Chrisoganus to be a friendly portrait of Jonson. Jonson's Horace, then, is in some particulars his own redrawing of that portrait's lineaments which he did not consider flattering.

attached himself. But Jonson wished to present a field in which the poetaster's pretensions were no less inept and ridiculous—that of poetry and the drama. Failing to ingratiate himself with the true poet, Horace, and so to obtain an introduction to his noble patron, Crispinus finds a substitute who is perfectly satisfactory to him—the blustering ignoramus, Captain Tucca. The latter secures Crispinus a post with a company embarked upon an infamous career of bawdry and abuse, two dramatic motives that Tucca can appreciate. Though the personal qualities of Marston and Dekker begin to emerge clearly in this act, neither Demetrius nor Crispinus loses his more general and representative absurdities. Crispinus, who is depicted much the more fully, continues to suggest the typical denizen of the mere suburbs of decent social and literary life. As such a parasite he is characterized no less through his association with Tucca and the venal players than through his courtship of Chloe. He is thus still the pretender to the nicely balanced literary and social values of Ovid's world, which he clumsily imitates but completely misunderstands.

During the third act Jonson partially lost himself in a world of minor figures. In the fourth act we are again on the highroad of the plot, again on the threshold of Ovid's world. We enter it this time by way of its purlieu, where Chloe is enacting her amorous history. Crispinus presents her to Tucca as the mistress whom the two at their last appearance had gone to seek. The swagger of the stew, which the Captain displays in her presence, she accepts as a sign of an authentic "*Gentleman*, and a *Commaunder*," "that's as good as a *Poet*." Crispinus sings his lady a ditty which he admits is an attempt to imitate the manner of Ovid, Propertius, and Tibullus. The verse entrances Albius, but is so halting that Tibullus' accusation of a plagiarism of Horace can only have been intentional irony. Mention of his hated name looses the abusive vocabulary of Demetrius and Tucca, which begins to pour down upon him. Tucca takes the lead in organizing a campaign to tickle Horace, "i' faith, for his Arro-gancie." But Chloe has little interest in the conspiracy; she prefers to hurry her Tucca to the banquet of the gods, hoping to find there a spare deity for him to impersonate. She naturally wishes him as well as Crispinus—her servants both—to assume roles in which they will have something "to doe" with her while she plays Venus.

The banquet of the gods is a masque-like phantasy, but much more than a decorative episode. It is modeled, even to many of its details, after the council on Olympus described in the first book of the *Iliad*. Suetonius, also, reports a dinner given by Augustus the Emperor, in which the guests appeared as gods and goddesses—an act of impiety causing great scandal. The frankly wanton tone of the assembly in *Poetaster* is established by the proclamation of Jupiter, who decrees that everyone present is to love as freely and as recklessly as passion dictates:

It shall be lawfull for every Lover,  
To breake loving oathes,  
To change their Lovers, & make love to others,  
As the heate of every ones Bloode,  
And the spirit of our *Nectar* shall inspire.<sup>45</sup>

The difference between the adepts and the pretenders, in their efforts to express this spirit, consists only in the difference of taste with which they apply the erotic philosophy. The initiated season their amorous talk with banter; Tucca, Chloe, and the rest are crudely direct. The climax of the celebration comes in the antiphonal singing of Crispinus and Hermogenes, in which they celebrate the occasion as a feast of sense. At that moment Ovid's ardor carries him to the peak of presumption. He sends to demand of the Emperor that "he presently Sacrifice as a Dish to this Banquet, his beautifull and wanton Daughter *Julia*."

The song, with Ovid's reaction to it, is almost certainly a reference to Chapman's *Ovids Banquet of Sense*, first published in 1595, which describes how all of Ovid's senses are fed as he first beholds Julia at her bath and then rushes with uncontrollable passion into her presence. The work is one of the most frank of the erotic poems written, in the last two decades of the sixteenth century, to pander to the taste of the Earl of Southampton and other aesthetic libertines of the time. This oblique reference to Chapman's poem subtly connects the wanton pastimes of Ovid and his associates, as well as those

<sup>45</sup>Suetonius, *The Lives of the Caesars* [*Vitae XII Caesarum*], Augustus, LXX: "Cena quoque eius secretior in fabulis fuit, quae vulgo δωδεκάθεος vocabatur; in qua deorum dearumque habitu discubuisse convivas, . . ." The passage was first brought into this connection by Peter Whalley, *The Works of Ben. Jonson* (London, 1756), II, 79 n.

<sup>46</sup>IV, iii, sig. H1v.

of their inept imitators, with a phase of contemporary society at which much of Jonson's satire came to be directed.

Jonson chose, for delivering his blow of stern chastisement, the precise moment of Ovid's supreme presumption. At no other point in the action could it have had a more salutary effect upon both the *dramatis personae* and the audience. Here is proof that, though the social pretenders may be ridiculed in a spirit suffused with laughter, the socially competent profligates are regarded as essentially unmoral and therefore satirized with appropriate severity. Their impersonation of the gods is subversive of virtue, because, in assuming that the gods are but feigned, they logically infer that virtue is but "painted." Singled out for particular attack is Crispinus, the "*parcell-Poet*" (that is, half-poet or poetaster). The true poet is one who, above all others, should cherish and eternize virtue. Yet Crispinus acts as though its goddess furnished no law whatever for his life. Caesar's final rejection of every plea for mercy to the culprits expresses what he considers to be the essential viciousness of the entire group that surrounds Ovid. Vainglory has seduced them into the most dangerous form of affectation. In airily pretending that the gods are fictions and that virtue is a superstition, they make a sham of the essentials of humanity:

This shewes, their Knowledge is meere Ignorance;  
 Their farre fetcht Dignity of soule, a Fancy;  
 And all their square pretext of Gravity  
 A meere vaine Glory: hence: away with 'hem."

The nature of the catastrophe, and its explanation that is put into the Emperor's mouth, make it clear that Jonson drew no sharp distinction, in his mind, between social and ethical satire. His theories in regard to the form were harmonious with those which were widely current in Renaissance literary criticism. Satire was a particularly vigorous and direct form of moral corrective. Actual satire of social folly was justified only if it were presented as an indirect result of unethical impulses.

In the scenes which immediately follow the punishment, Jonson shows apparent sympathy with Ovid and Julia. However, his attitude here has been misconceived. Surely he did not forget the structure of his drama, in order to allow his genius to wander irresponsibly

into a romantic situation in which it moved awkwardly. The farewell between Ovid and Julia inevitably invites unfavorable comparison with corresponding scenes between Romeo and Juliet. Such a juxtaposition has obscured the fact that the final encounter of the lovers was designed by Jonson to serve an entirely different purpose from that of Shakespeare. With Romeo and Juliet, at least in the scenes of parting, we are supposed to have complete sympathy. Their imaginatively expressed concord of amorous wills displays them as two of Cupid's saints. Ovid and to a lesser degree Julia, on the other hand, must be presented as victims of a destructive passion. They are overwhelmed by no mere tragic flaw in characters essentially noble, but by a moral weakness which poisons their entire natures. Neither has been purged of his fault by the Emperor's punishment; neither shows in these scenes any diminution of amorous *hybris*. Julia resents the deserved correction, persistently regarding her passions, and not her reason, as the proper ruler of her life. She cries:

O, Father; since thou gav'st me not my Minde,  
Strive not to rule it: Take, but what thou gav'st  
To thy disposure, thy Affections  
Rule not in me; I must beare all my griefes,  
Let me use all my pleasures."

Ovid is similarly the willing slave of his passion. In his parting speech he cries, "There is no stay / In Amorous pleasures." After Julia disappears for the last time, he falls upon his knees to utter these words of complete surrender to love:

. . . . . I am mad with Love.  
There is no Spirit, under heaven, that workes  
With such illusion; yet such witchcraft kill mee,  
Ere a sound minde, without it, save my life.

. . . . .  
"The truest wisdom sillie men can have,  
"Is dotage, on the follies of their flesh."

It is the lascivious, not the romantic, Ovid who appears here. He is thus but another of those figures, perverted by amorous passion, against whom the moralists of all sorts inveighed during the last decade of Queen Elizabeth's reign.

The appearance of Ovid in these last two scenes should, therefore,



be regarded as making a positive contribution to Jonson's experiments with the possibilities of dramatic satire. The proper and logical climax to Ovid's story, in a piece of fiction essentially satiric, would have been the scene of castigation, with or without the reform of the errant individual. By indicating the effect of the punishment not upon Ovid's morals but upon his emotions, Jonson transposed his satire into a key not unlike that of later tragicomedy. The poet, even at the moment of his deserved punishment, is almost pathetic. Ovid and his erotic philosophy were to exert a formative influence upon the comedy of social satire throughout the seventeenth century. Therefore, this introduction of him, not as the classical poet whom the cultivated libertines of the English Renaissance regarded as the fountainhead of the essential, gorgeous, and sensuous elements of poetry, but as a doomed sensualist, is a landmark in the literary history of the century.

If the foregoing interpretation of Ovid's story is sound, that story must be regarded as the essential plot of *Poetaster*, which continues and extends the methods used in Jonson's earlier plays of the same type. The drama is fundamentally a social satire. The climbers are displayed with all their now familiar pretentious ineptitude. To be sure, not so much time as previously is devoted to their exhibition. It is to the society formed by the adepts that more critical attention is given. They are shown to have created an organization the grace of which is not only hollow but also an expression of moral nihilism. The new element added to the picture is the deleterious influence exerted by the ideals of the coterie upon the poets and dramatists associated with it. The poetasters are depicted as parasites infesting the lower levels of society. Their characters have been distorted by their eager servility to the ideals of the profligate world. Jonson's drama represents the crash of their rotten edifice. Ovid as the leader of this *fin de siècle* society, and Julia as his half-willing, half-reluctant victim, are properly given the most condign and spectacular punishment. Their fall and their suffering provide Jonson's ethical spirit with its clearest utterance in the play. Thus conceived, the Ovid plot, far from being "a mere disturbing incongruity," becomes the structural center of *Poetaster*.

Such a conception of the drama, it must be admitted, reduces the final act to a kind of appendage, loosely attached to the main action.

Jonson usually employed the last acts of his comedies for the exposure or reformation of his rogues and fools. The fact that he completes the correction of the principal characters in the fourth act of *Poetaster* and there pronounces his most impressive ethical judgments leaves the fifth act dangling. That is incontestably an artistic blemish. But the arrangement does have the merit of strengthening the fourth act, the part of most Elizabethan dramas which often brought languor to the spectators, by forcing them to assent to the author's none-too-subtle devices for holding them in suspense. But in building up this portion of the play, Jonson exhausted the material from which he customarily constructed his last acts. If the drama had been in essence a narrative, his method would have made the final act deadly dull. But, since Jonson designed *Poetaster* not to tell a story but to serve as the vehicle for many sorts of satire, he was able to sustain the interest up to its close. The satiric business which remained to be settled was ample enough to fill one act and to be easily arranged in an effective comico-satiric pattern.

Jonson saw that he was left with two important duties to perform. He had to deflate the pair of pseudo poets. Being the most ridiculous and despicable of the parasites that preyed on the libertine society headed by Ovid and Julia, they, too, deserved appropriate castigation. He also had to make his audience comprehend sympathetically the standards by which he judged the poetasters, and indeed all of those in the play who had deviated from social and moral sanity.

The first of these purposes was accomplished by isolating the pseudo poets from their Roman milieu and giving them satiric correction in terms that emphasized their points of resemblance to Marston and Dekker. Each is made to read one of his typical effusions. That of Demetrius is weak in content and feeble in execution. His harmless incompetence is viewed as incorrigible. He is condemned to don the livery of a court fool and given the following sentence: "Hencefoorth, thinke thy selfe no other, then they make thee."

Crispinus' poem, which is introduced as a document in evidence, is a mass of pretentious and affected verbiage. The device of administering an emetic, which causes him to vomit up a vocabulary which would be recognized as Marston's own, is modeled on an incident in Lucian's *Lexiphanes*." In the Greek satire, Sopolis, a

"Dekker may have been the first to recognize this specific likeness. At any rate, he

physician, gives the bad poet a draught which causes him to disgorge much of his most offensive vocabulary. After he is rid of the rumbling words, Lycius prescribes the authors whom he should read in the future and the words which he should employ. Virgil gives Crispinus similar instruction after he has been purged, warning him, in particular, not to hunt for "wild, out-landish Termes" or rack his verses to make them entertain some "*Gallo-Belgick Phrase*."

This scene of trial and punishment is Jonson's rough, but effective, way of ridiculing the stupidity and tasteless diction of his two adversaries in the stage quarrel. Though characteristic of Lucian's dissimilar spirit, the purging of Lexiphanes was nicely adapted to the immediate needs of *Poetaster*. The trial scene, taken as a whole, gave Jonson a chance to take another excursion into broad farce like that which closes *Every Man in His Humor*. In the Aristophanic gusto of the final scene of *Poetaster*, the fusion which he had established, earlier in the play, between social and literary satire is momentarily broken. The farce seems to have entered the service of lampoon.<sup>9</sup> But even at that point the personal satire strikes a blow for the general cause of literary decency.

Moreover, the device of having judgment pronounced upon these purveyors of fustian enabled Jonson to render his audience the last service necessary for making his comedy satirically cogent. This phase of the concluding act begins with an authoritative defense of Horace and his particular sort of satire. Then logically comes Virgil's glorification of poetry and its function. Jonson musters all his skill as a dramatic technician to establish the great Roman, not only as the supreme poet of Augustus' court, but also as the natural representative of the highest sort of literary achievement.<sup>10</sup> Before he

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has Tucca in *Satiro-mastix* say to Horace, "Thou'lt shoote thy quilles at mee, when my terrible backe's turn'd for all this, wilt not Porcupine? and bring me & my Heliconistes into thy Dialogues to make us talke madlie, wut not Lucian?" (Sig. H<sub>3</sub>.) The chances are, however, that Lucian is here conceived not as an individual but as the archetype of all biting satirists. Baskervill points out (*op. cit.*, pp. 44-45, 307) that the farcical device of an emetic had also been used by Nashe in reference to Harvey, as well as in some documents of the Marprelate controversy.

<sup>9</sup>The various attempts of the critics to discover some contemporary of Jonson's—preferably Shakespeare or Chapman—at least adumbrated in the figure of Virgil, have all been judiciously considered and rejected by Herford and Simpson. (*Op. cit.*, I, 432-36.) The conclusion of their investigation is, "We are thrown back then on the view that Jonson's Virgil is simply Vergil; . . . he supports and gives verisimilitude to the partly symbolic Horace, Crispinus, and Demetrius, but is not a symbol himself." With this statement the present writer completely agrees.

appears on the stage, the other poets advance opinions of his work, which establish it as the expression of inspired wisdom. Jonson's own conception of the essential quality of great poetry is revealed in the emphasis he has Virgil's friends place upon the sheer power of his compositions—a quality that has freed them from the pedantry of learning and tradition and given them universality:

And for his *Poësie*, 'tis so ramm'd with Life,  
That it shall gather strength of Life, with being,  
And live hereafter, more admir'd, then now.<sup>41</sup>

These critical comments raise Virgil to an eminence from which his pronouncements upon poetry, and, in particular, upon the sort written by Horace, can be delivered with Olympian authority. Such is the effect of his defense of the purposes and methods of satire:

'Tis not the wholesome sharpe *Morality*,  
Or modest anger of a *Satyricke* Spirit,  
That hurts, or wounds the body of a State;  
But the sinister Application  
Of the malicious, ignorant, and base  
Interpreter; who will distort, and straine  
The generall *Scope* and purpose of an *Author*,  
To his particular, and private spleene.<sup>42</sup>

In a second speech Virgil justifies Horace's temper as being the inevitable expression of outraged virtue:

His *sharpnesse*, that is most excusable;  
As being forc't out of a suffering Vertue,  
Oppressed with the Licence of the Time:  
And howsoever Fooles, or Jerking *Pedants*,  
Players, or such like *Buffonary* wits,  
May with their beggerly, and barren trash,  
Tickle base vulgar eares, in their despight;  
This (like *Joves* Thunder) shall their pride controule.  
*"The honest Satyre hath the happiest Soule."*<sup>43</sup>

Speeches like these clearly show that the last act of *Poetaster* is supplementary to the plot of the comedy. That business is over with the fourth act. So is the social satire which establishes the tone of the drama. However, the catastrophe of Ovid and his associates must be shared by all their hangers-on, including the poetasters. They are soiled by the guilt of the morally disruptive tendencies

<sup>41</sup>V, i, sig. K<sub>2</sub>v.

<sup>42</sup>V, iii, sig. L<sub>2</sub>r&v.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.*, sig. M<sub>1</sub>v.

of the courtly group and must also be punished. The play's final act, by dedicating itself to that duty, on the one hand shifts the emphasis of Jonson's ridicule, and on the other builds up the literary standards by which the poetasters are tried and found wanting. Thus the way is prepared for Jonson to introduce his audience to the symbolically represented world of the dramatist and his professional adversaries. Here, while justifying his own art, he creates a region of ideal poetic striving, where his conceptions find their most eloquent expression. Except for the farcical purging of the poetasters, one must grant that the appeal of the last act is not dramatic. It depends largely on the strength of its poetry and the importance of the ideas expressed for illuminating the satiric purposes of the comedy. Admittedly, the *raisonneur*, or representative of the author, in formal satire performs his office less clearly and vigorously than the ubiquitous commentator in his earlier comical satires. That character was too prominent in both *Every Man Out of His Humor* and *Cynthias Revels*. But Jonson's attempt, in *Poetaster*, to subordinate the figure more deftly to the main action of the play obscures its function.

The foregoing analysis of *Poetaster* should fix more securely the position of the drama, both in Jonson's career and in the development of satiric comedy during the first decade of the seventeenth century. The most brilliant characteristic of his ingenuity, as revealed in *Poetaster*, is his scholarly and imaginative revival of the literary life of Augustan Rome. This piece of invention may have been initiated by his desire to present, through that society, a symbolical picture of the relations of true poets and poetasters to frivolous and dissolute London society of the last years of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Once embarked upon his imaginative project, he inevitably used the devices that he had employed in his earlier satiric plays and adhered to the literary principles that had governed all writers of satire, at least from the time of Horace. Consequently, the mood of personal hostility which clearly appears at intervals in *Poetaster* is restrained and generalized according to the accepted rules of civilized literary behavior. Hence, even Crispinus and Demetrius represent, most of the time, types of intellectual incompetence and fraud, and only occasionally display the unmistakably individual characteristics of Marston and Dekker. Similarly in the case of Horace, type qualities of satiric decorum predominate over those intended to suggest the man Ben

Jonson. Moreover, the orthodox satiric temper is carefully preserved throughout the comedy. The occasional outbursts of farce and hilarious ridicule do not diminish the stern ethical disapproval which is the emotional justification for the various sorts of laughter aroused by the comic action.

The fable chosen was highly appropriate for the attainment of these ends. To the intellectual man of the Renaissance, every historical situation was more than an entertaining part of a vanished world. Since history inevitably repeated itself, such situations were always previous occurrences of those in an immediate present. The fall of Ovid and the discomfiture of his profligate companions would happen again in all their details when the same forces reappeared in society. The effective presentation of this ancient disaster could serve as an impressive warning for any contemporaries of Jonson who found themselves slipping into a similar social and moral pattern. So he forced one period of Roman history to yield its experience, which he treated as practical wisdom and hence as an effective aid to his attempted correction of dangerous tendencies in the society of his day. Particularly, he saw in his reconstruction of the world of fashion of that remote time a way of protesting against the debasement of English literature through the sycophancy of the parasites of the London beau monde and its suburbs.

All three of these comical satires of Ben Jonson's are in a sense experimental. Yet they represent a steady emancipation of his satirical powers. Thus freed from the confinements of a rigid form, they grow in both depth and range. To say that these satirical comedies represent a disastrous capitulation of a dramatist to the ethical and critical elements in his mind, is to mistake Jonson's purpose in devising the plays. In *Every Man Out of His Humor* he transposed the established methods of formal satire, as exactly as he could, into the idiom of the stage. To be sure, he availed himself of the opportunities which drama offers for elaboration of the characters and for expansion of the action. But he was unable to disguise the mechanical way in which he assembled the gulls and knaves and marshaled them through and out of the play in a kind of single file. In *Cynthias Revels* he concealed the gaunt frame of *Every Man Out of His Humor*, by overlaying the structure with some of the decorative opulence of the court masque. For the procession of fools which marched through

satire, he substituted a more artful formalism of balanced characters, borrowed from Lyly's court comedies. The change was practicable because Jonson limited the objects of his satire in *Cynthias Revels* to pseudo courtiers and their absurdities. Such methods enabled him to envelope his ridicule in an obvious sort of beauty and to make his personal instigations to attack and exhortation more nearly an integral part of a self-sufficient world of fiction. In *Poetaster* he goes still further in the direction of successful imaginative investiture of his private derisive impulses. He clothes his satire in the glamor of a past age that appealed strongly to the classically trained man of letters. In this way Jonson seems to generalize and to objectify his hostile attitude toward the world in which he lived and toward certain individuals with whom he was at the moment quarreling. *Poetaster* thus forms an ambitious attempt to produce an effective mixture of personal, ethical, and social satire, and to clarify the interdependence of the three modes of ridicule and correction. But Jonson succeeded only partially. He accomplished no perfect fusion of the different elements. The requisite skill for constructing a plot for a satiric play, Jonson first showed in *Volpone*.

## CHAPTER VI

### John Marston's Early Satiric Plays

John Marston came to the composition of his first plays with none of the dramatic experience which Jonson had accumulated when he devised *Every Man Out of His Humor*. Except for *The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion's Image* (1598), he had produced only formal satires. The restraining order of the Bishops thus threatened to stifle his only authentic impulse toward authorship. If he wished to continue his characteristic writing, he would have to discover a literary form that would serve as a vehicle for satire and yet would escape the ban of the censor. But his unfamiliarity with the stage was a serious handicap to his efforts. Even if he had been aware, at the time *Antonio and Mellida* was composed, of Jonson's innovation, Marston would probably have hesitated to follow such a lead into a new dramatic construction. He found it easier to begin by imitating a simpler form of play in vogue—one in which the conventions were clearly defined. He chose at the start to copy the methods of the romances and melodrama then the prevailing fashion at the popular theatres. He tried with indifferent success to force this drama of exciting incident to become a suitable vehicle for the spirit that he had effectively expressed in *The Scourge of Villainy*.

In the satires which comprised the *Scourge* Marston's critical point of view had appeared as harsh, violent, and misanthropic. It was more purely destructive than that displayed by Jonson in his three comical satires. The latter's attitude, though consistently severe, became increasingly explicit in its attempts to correct fools and to reform knaves. Jonson defined his ethical position clearly, and always remained objective toward the creatures of his derision. (Marston, on the contrary, betrays fear of the seductive powers which he castigates. He seems to be fascinated by the evil he knows he should detest.) This fact is revealed by the curiously antipathetic points of view expressed in his first volume, *The Metamorphosis of Pygmalion's Image, and Certain Satires*. The title poem is a luscious amorous work, which he later rather lamely asserted was a parody of that type of Ovidian imitation. Yet many of the satires are savage attacks



on the lewdness he himself has just displayed. (His violent indignation is a kind of penance which a neurotic man requires of himself for his imperfectly suppressed attraction to the very vices against which he cries out as though in pain. A mind thus divided against itself found it hard to accept the restraints and limitations of a carefully constructed drama. In every one of Marston's plays, and particularly in his early efforts, there was a continuous struggle between his impetuous spirit and the form in which he seeks to express it. Hence he never succeeded in writing a satiric play which achieved singleness of purpose, unity of tone, or perfection of form.)

### I. *Antonio and Mellida*

Marston's initial dramatic work was the *First Part of Antonio and Mellida*, evidently composed after the Bishops had issued their restraining order of June 1, 1599.<sup>1</sup> As a type this play belongs to the romantic melodrama which enjoyed a period of rejuvenation about the year 1600. The popular demand for exciting stories, sauced with plenty of thrills and horrors, stimulated Jonson's revision of *The Spanish Tragedy*, the publication of a new edition of *Soliman and Perseda* in 1599, and Marston's infelicitous choice of the story of *Antonio and Mellida* as a vehicle for satire. A cursory review of the tale of the two hostile dukes, Andrugio and Piero, imitative in some of its features of Sidney's *Arcadia*, will show what an inappropriate harbor it was for Marston's headlong reformatory zeal. The main features of the plot are as follows:

Andrugio, the Duke of Genoa, has been routed by Piero Sforza, Duke of Venice, in a sea fight and banished from his kingdom.

<sup>1</sup>E. K. Chambers (*Elizabethan Stage*, III, 429) presents the following conclusive evidence as to the date of the composition of *Antonio and Mellida*: "In v. i of Part i a painter brings in two pictures, one dated 'Anno Domini, 1599', the other 'Aetatis suae 24'. I agree with Small, 92, that these are probably real dates and that the second indicates Marston's own age. As he must have completed his twenty-fourth year by 3 Feb. 1600 at latest, Part i was probably produced in 1599." Morse S. Allen (*The Satire of John Marston* [Columbus, O., 1920], pp. 23, 128) advances a similar opinion, stating that the play was written at about the same time as the satires. The statement in the text has not taken *Histriomastix* into consideration. This may have been written before *Antonio and Mellida*. Marston's hand can be detected in *Histriomastix*, but was probably exercised only with revision. Chambers (*op. cit.*, IV, 18) believes that Marston worked on the old play during the summer of 1599. Chambers adds, "I take it that *Histriomastix* was one of the 'musty fopperies of antiquity' with which we learn from *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, v. 112, that the Paul's boys began." See also below, p. 183, n. 133.

Antonio, the son of the fugitive, is in love with Mellida, Piero's daughter. The adventures of these faithful, star-crossed lovers form the main plot of the play. Antonio first appears, disguised as an Amazon, fleeing from a field of battle on which he has suffered disastrous defeat. The subsequent action is all pitched in the same key of facile excitement. Antonio later evades imminent capture by disguising himself as a sailor. And his feigning death lends picturesque suspense to the revivifying of the suspected corpse in time for a scene of final reconciliation and union of the lovers. Mellida's adventures are similarly drawn from the conventions of popular romance. She dons the customary doublet and hose of the page, in order to accompany her lover on his perilous adventures. She even contrives to precipitate the timeworn situation in which the *amorosa*, like Julia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, makes her lover talk about herself, while she waxes wistful for the audience. Mellida, here, without accepting any responsibilities in the game of love, like Rosalind can drink-in her suitor's impassioned declarations of love for his supposedly absent lady.<sup>9</sup> This part of the play is undistinguished. The speeches of the characters reveal no credible human emotions and so seem to be an uninterrupted stream of fustian.

During the progress of the sensational tale Marston's Juvenalian ardor finds expression only upon the occasions when he turns aside from his main dramatic business, to deride various sorts of fools haunting the purlieus of the tyrant's court. Such restriction of the derision to purely subsidiary characters makes the play inferior to *Every Man Out of His Humor* as a vehicle of the satiric spirit. For example, the induction to *Antonio and Mellida*, in comparison with the induction as Jonson employed it, is technically inept and awkward. Jonson used the device solely to explain the nature and function of his several commentators. It thus formed a kind of bridge between satire and his new version of *vetus comoedia*. He made no attempt to introduce his characters in his induction. That, he regarded as an essential part of the play proper.

But Marston's tragicomedy was so filled with melodramatic action that it offered him insufficient occasions for presenting all the gulls in their full panoply of folly. Consequently, he forced his induction

<sup>9</sup>First Part of *Antonio and Mellida*, IV, i, 160-80 (*The Works of John Marston*, ed. A. H. Bullen [London, 1887], I, 69).

to take over that important satiric office. The induction then becomes the equivalent of a program of the modern theatre or a dramatized anticipation of one of Bernard Shaw's expository prefaces. A number of actors appear, each in the role he is presently to assume. Each comments briefly on the nature of his part or gives the audience a short preview of his character. They are assisted in their self-revelation not by Feliche, who is to serve as the conventional satiric commentator in the actual play, but by Alberto, who is there one of the gulls.

The author's manner of presenting Matzagente will serve to illustrate his method. The fellow enters to utter five lines of thunderous fustian. Feliche, who throughout the induction is an amused, thoroughly objective spectator, asks, "What rattling thunderclap breaks from his lips?", and Alberto answers for the author: "O! 'tis native to his part. For acting a modern' braggadoch under the person of Matzagente, the Duke of Milan's son, it may seem to suit with good fashion of coherence." The audience at once realizes that Matzagente is a descendant of the braggart of Latin comedy, by way of that branch of his numerous progeny which had settled in Italian comedy of the Renaissance.<sup>4</sup> In other words, he is a Spanish braggart, blood brother of Armado, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, and, like him, primarily a virtuoso in mannered speech. Consequently, he brings to his part few traces of the boastful, poltroonish *miles gloriosus* of the native English tradition. Piero clearly expects that sort of bombast to pour from his lips. He is puzzled to hear him speak "with a spruce Attic accent of adulterate Spanish," but Alberto understands why he talks thus:

So 'tis resolv'd. For Milan being half Spanish, half high Dutch, and half Italians, the blood of chieftest houses is corrupt and mongrel'd; so that you shall see a fellow vain-glorious for a Spaniard, gluttonous for a Dutchman, proud for an Italian, and a fantastic idiot for all. Such a one conceit this Matzagente.<sup>5</sup>

Other figures definitely labeled in Marston's curious induction are

<sup>4</sup>I.e., "common" or "worthless."

<sup>5</sup>Induction, ll. 95-99 (*Works*, I, 11).

<sup>6</sup>Cf. O. J. Campbell, "*Love's Labour's Lost* Re-studied," in *Studies in Shakespeare, Milton and Donne* ("University of Michigan Publications, Language and Literature," I [New York, 1925]), pp. 22-34, *passim*.

<sup>7</sup>Induction, ll. 102-7 (*Works*, I, 11).

Forobosco, a Plautine parasite, and Balurdo, the only fool, taken from formal satire, who is here anatomized. He is the familiar "servile hound, that loves the scent of forerunning fashion, like an empty hollow vault, still giving an echo to wit."

The full description of Matzagente and Forobosco arouses expectations that are disappointed. Neither plays a part of the slightest importance in the drama which follows. In the action, Marston makes no use at all of Matzagente. The humour which he contributes is merely incidental and decorative. Probably laughter was evoked by some of his speeches, such as those which would be recognized as burlesques or as feeble imitations of euphuism. At least once he joins an assembly of Mellida's suitors, where he exhibits his quality, first by dancing with her, and then by pouring into her ear a stream of pretentious figures of rhetoric. Mellida's response is a series of insults, cast, like those of the traditional buffoon, in the form of cruel similes:

My thoughts are as black as your beard; my fortunes as ill-proportioned as your legs; and all the powers of my mind as leaden as your wit, and as dusty as your face is swarthy.\*

Such savage abuse destroys the dramatic realism of this encounter. Mellida clearly speaks more for Marston than for herself. Here, as elsewhere in the play, the irrepressible satirist breaks through his unsubstantial comic fiction, and pushes his characters behind him.

Forobosco, the parasite, appears even less frequently in the play. In the second act he is given a moment in which to flatter Balurdo to the top of his bent:

So help me your sweet bounty, you have the most graceful presence, applausive elecuty, amazing volubility, polish'd adoration, delicious affability. [Etc., etc.]\*

At the end of this prolonged excursion into bathos, Feliche bursts out into a venomous attack on flattery, delivered to the audience in an aside:

For flattery.

O how I hate this same Egyptian louse,  
A rotten maggot, that lives by stinking filth  
Of tainted spirits! vengeance to such dogs,  
That sprout by gnawing senseless carrion!<sup>10</sup>

\**Ibid.*, ll. 37-39 (*Works*, I, 8-9).

\**Ibid.*, ll. 112-24, *passim* (*Works*, I, 34).

<sup>10</sup>II, i, 177-80 (*Works*, I, 37).

<sup>11</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 130-34 (*Works*, I, 35).

(Here is Marston again intruding, with a passage that he might have borrowed from *The Scourge of Villainy*.) He makes renewed application of his earlier method of deflation by excoriation. It forms but an ineffective substitute for Jonson's way of exposing the gull, through an artfully prepared comic incident. Hard to understand is Marston's purpose in devoting so much of his induction to the exposition of figures whom, in the play, he almost completely neglects.<sup>11</sup> Whatever his reason, the fact discloses the difficulties which beset him when he tried to accommodate to the exigencies of a dramatic structure the methods he had developed in his satires.

Marston encounters almost as great difficulties in finding for his other fools assured places in the action of the play. His judgment of their absurdities seems to shift and vary, largely because of a corresponding instability in the critical attitude of Feliche, Marston's equivalent of the commentators in *Every Man Out of His Humor*. Like Macilente and Carlo, he serves as the official intermediary between the dramatis personae and the audience. In the induction Feliche himself explains his master bias as follows:

'Tis steady and must seem so impregably fortified with his own content that no envious thought could ever invade his spirit; never surveying any man so unmeasuredly happy, whom I thought not justly hateful for some true impoverishment; . . . and therefore as far from envying any man, as he valued all men infinitely distant from accomplished beatitude. These native adjuncts appropriate to me the name of Feliche.<sup>12</sup>

Such words seem merely to reiterate the repudiation of Envy, and her "abhorred child, Detraction," which Marston had expressed in his satires.<sup>13</sup> Yet the speech sharply distinguishes the censorious tem-

<sup>11</sup>Possibly the induction was composed some time after the play was written, or even after it was acted; and Marston, realizing that certain of his ridiculous figures had been inadequately explained to his audience, so fashioned the induction that it would compensate for this weakness. Conceivably, Jonson's successful use of an induction in *Every Man Out of His Humor* may have suggested to Marston the invention of his own, to appear, perhaps for the first time, when his play was published in 1602.

<sup>12</sup>Ll. 113-24 (*Works*, I, 12).

<sup>13</sup>Cf. the third stanza of his dedication of *The Scourge of Villainy* to Detraction:

"My spirit is not puffed up with fat fume  
Of slimy ale, nor Bacchus' heating grape.  
My mind disdains the dingy muddy scum  
Of abject thoughts and Envy's raging hate.  
True judgment slight regards Opinion,  
A spritely wit disdains Detraction."

(*Works*, III, 299.)

(In his poems Marston had announced that the proper ingredients of the authentic satiric mood were impatience, cynicism, and melancholy. In the proem to *The Scourge of Villainy* he had invoked melancholy as the emotion essential to a man bent upon plowing up "the hidden entrails of rank villainy."<sup>10</sup> At other times he boasts that his spirit is cynic and thus at the opposite pole from stoicism.) He shouts:

My soul is vex'd; what power will resist,  
Or dares to stop a sharp-fang'd satirist?  
Who'll cool my rage? who'll stay my itching fist?<sup>18</sup>

Though supposed to be a royal counselor to Piero, Feliche seldom appears in that realistic role. To be sure, his first speech in the play is a salutary warning against the pride which has puffed up Piero after he has laid low his enemies. The speech is solemn and sententious, as befits a man wise in the ways of the world:

	.	.	This same smoke, call'd pride,
Take heed:	.	.	.
.	.	.	.
.	.	.	O! she's ominous;

<sup>10</sup>Allen, *Satire of John Marston*, p. 129.

Enticeth princes to devour heaven,  
 Swallow omnipotence, out-stare dread fate,  
 Subdue eternity in giant thought;  
 Heaves up their heart with swelling, puff'd conceit,  
 Till their souls burst with venom'd arrogance.  
 Beware, Piero.<sup>17</sup>

But, most of the time, Feliche seems to regard himself as emancipated from the social obligations of a courtier. He acts as if he held a roving commission to ferret out the evils of court life and to excogitate his own distaste for them. He sits up all night to spy upon the nocturnal delights of Piero's entourage, to discover if these creatures "Could force me envy their felicity."<sup>18</sup>

The knowledge thus gained does not charm. It merely makes him painfully aware of the immoral character of these pursuits and the essential wretchedness of those who seek happiness in them. His reaction to this discovery confirms his deep satisfaction with his own situation. His disclosure of the rottenness underneath the meretricious glitter of court life but strengthens the serenity of his spirit.

I envy nothing but the travense light.<sup>19</sup>  
 O, had it eyes, and ears, and tongues, it might  
 See sport, hear speech of most strange surquedries.  
 O, if that candle-light were made a poet,  
 He would prove a rare firking satirist,  
 And draw the core forth of imposthum'd sin.  
 Well, I thank heaven yet, that my content  
 Can envy nothing, but poor candle-light.<sup>20</sup>

In such lines as these Feliche almost ostentatiously announces that he envies no courtier his immorality, even though it be disguised under gorgeous trappings. He envies only those who possess the power of exposing its foulness. (And the office that he undertakes, in his set soliloquies and in his biting asides to the audience, is that of exposure.) He thus stands almost as completely apart from the action as did the author of formal satire from his creatures.

His critical aloofness should co-operate with his stoical spirit to

<sup>17</sup>I, i, 48-49, 52-58 (*Works*, I, 19).

<sup>18</sup>III, ii, 7 (*Works*, I, 49).

<sup>19</sup>Bullen suggests the obvious correction to "traverse light," i.e., light cast slant-wise." (*Works of John Marston*, I, 50, n. i.)

<sup>20</sup>III, ii, 9-16 (*Works*, I, 50).

give all his comments ethical seriousness. This is true even of the criticism which he directs against creatures whose humours are scarcely more than forms of social ineptitude. These gulls are all suitors of the free-spoken, witty lady of the court, Rossaline. She fleers at them in the tone and in the similitudes of detraction which, we have seen, characterized the typical buffoon. By using both her and Feliche as agents of satire, Marston contrives to direct two sorts of derision against his fools, just as Jonson did by enlisting both Carlo and Macilente in that service.

Feliche, then, is the stern moral mentor. He regards even harmless affectation as a sign of moral delinquency. He detects sin everywhere and constantly denounces it. In so doing he loses his spirit of professed calm and rich content. He becomes a thinly disguised personification of "grim Reproof, stern hate of villainy," or of

Fair Detestation of foul odious sin,

In which our swinish times lie wallowing."<sup>a</sup>

Thus Feliche, in spite of his name, is led by his moral fervor to express the *saeva indignatio* that his author had worked up while writing his satires. (The result is direct contradiction of Marston's expressed belief that the satiric attitude toward fops and pseudo gallants should be permeated by laughter and merriment.) Feliche's undeviating severity can be illustrated by an examination of his attitude toward Castilio, one of Rossaline's suitors. The fellow, as his name indicates, is a pretender to courtly graces. In *Antonio and Mellida* Marston gives his full name as Signor Castilio Balthazar, thereby informing the audience that the gull's folly was the result of awkward attempts to practice the principles laid down in Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*, the model of all Renaissance books of courtesy.<sup>b</sup> Hence this type of fool in the formal satires was commonly

<sup>a</sup>*The Scourge of Villainy*, Proemium in *Librum Tertium*, ll. 11, 13-14 (*Works*, III, 353).

<sup>b</sup>See above, p.

<sup>c</sup>Bullen (*Works of John Marston*, III, 264, n. 2) believes that the name Castilio, which occurs frequently in all the satires, suggested also, perhaps first, "a gallant of Castilian breeding." This seems improbable. The typical Spaniard in Elizabethan comedy was the wordmonger "with a mint of phrases in his brain"—the Spanish braggart. The Castilio character was sometimes called, also, Balthazar, in the works of satirists. Guilpin, for example, calls by that name "a gracious seeming but unkind courtier":

"Come to the Court, and Balthazar affords  
Fountaines of holy and rose-water words."

(*Skialetheia*, Satire 1, sig C4.)



called Castilio or Balthazar. Marston's portrait of him was drawn with a firm hand, and made him not only a social pretender but also a low amorist—the dupe of all the city "madams." Marston habitually associates his Castilios with his Cyprians, and both are "lewd nags."<sup>14</sup> Marston's, and Feliche's, attitude toward a figure compounded of such diverse elements was inevitably contradictory. His social posturing was harmless folly and deserved nothing more cruel than derisive laughter. But his partially hidden licentiousness was a sin and deserved reprobation.

Castilio at his first appearance is a veritable Fastidious Brisk. He enters "singing fantastically," and, though he says that Rossaline's "wit stings, blisters, galls off the skin with the tart acrimony of her sharp quickness," he professes himself her abject slave. A moment later he proves the depth of his devotion by vowing to preserve, forever inviolate, the sole of his shoe which has enjoyed the inestimable privilege of rubbing her spittle into the ground. Rossaline responds to his vow with characteristically vulgar tartness: "I'll spit in thy mouth, and thou wilt, to grace thee." This encounter displays abysmal folly in a form which awakens faint disgust in a modern reader. But it hardly prepares him for Feliche's violent diatribe which follows:

O that the stomach of this queasy age  
 Digests, or brooks such raw unseasoned gobs,  
 And vomits not them forth! O! slavish sots!  
 Servant, quoth you? faugh! if a dog should crave  
 And beg her service, he should have it straight:  
 She'd give him favours too, to lick her feet, . . .<sup>15</sup>

The reaction, here, is not that of a stoic wrapped in measureless content, but of a malcontent, in the correct Elizabethan sense of the term—that is, of a man dissatisfied, to the point of disgust, with the entire human situation of his day. Only a man who had already pronounced the creatures of his world beneath contempt could have been stimulated to such nauseous utterance, by follies so unimportant as those which Castilio showed.

Castilio's next exhibition of his social flamboyance provokes Feliche

<sup>14</sup>Cf. Satire 1, ll. 27-50 (*Works*, III, 264-65); *The Scourge of Villainy*, "In Lectores prorsus indignos," ll. 15, 43-48 (*Works*, III, 300, 302); *ibid.*, Satire 3, ll. 107-10 (*Works*, III, 321-22).

<sup>15</sup>II, i, 94-99 (*Works*, I, 33).

to an exposition of his philosophical position. And the fool shows that he is indeed a "perfum'd" Castilio, by sprinkling himself, at his entrance, from a casting bottle of "sweet water" and exclaiming, "Am not I a most sweet youth now?" He then warbles "to the delicious conclave of my mistress' ear" and drinks to Feliche, who greets his pledge by muttering, in an aside to the audience, "Plague on thee for an ass!" Thereupon Castilio fatuously asks him, "Now thou hast seen the court, by the perfection of it, dost not envy it?" Feliche in his reply ceases to be a critic of either the particular fool or the social rottenness of which he is a symptom. He becomes, instead, a philosopher and explains the stoical spirit in which Marston tried to look at folly in this first drama of his:

I wonder it doth not envy me. Why, man,  
I have been borne upon the spirit's wings,  
The soul's swift Pegasus, the fantasy:  
And from the height of contemplation,  
Have view'd the feeble joints men totter on.  
I envy none; but hate, or pity all.<sup>60</sup>

For when he observes men of every sort, he sees that their admirable qualities are invariably sullied by their natural defects:

That creature fair but proud; him rich, but sot;  
Th'other witty, but unmeasured arrogant;  
. . . . .  
When I discourse all these, and see myself  
Nor fair, nor rich, nor witty, great, nor fear'd,  
Yet amply suited with all full content,  
Lord, how I clap my hands, and smooth my brow,  
Rubbing my quiet bosom, tossing up  
A grateful spirit to Omnipotence.<sup>61</sup>

(So lofty a spirit, unfortunately, Feliche displays only when communing with himself or addressing the sympathetic audience. Fools and knaves quickly arouse his fury and his disgust and cause his armed and resolved hand to reach for his whip of steel.)

Besides being, now the serene stoic and now the denunciatory Marston, Feliche assumes a third role—that of wit-intriguer. He devises a trap into which the victim will fall and lie bare to exposure.

<sup>60</sup>III, ii, 42-47 (*Works*, I, 51).

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 49-50, 56-61 (*Works*, I, 51-52).

Castilio responds to his solemn enunciation of his happiness by protesting that his own is much greater. He says:

I cannot sleep for kisses; I cannot rest  
For ladies' letters, that importune me  
With such unusèd vehemence of love, . . ."

To this boast Feliche answers, "Confusion seize me, but I think thou liest." For his part, he has found the ladies chaste and impregnable. The remark lures Castilio into the trap which Feliche has set. The vainglorious amorist attempts to confute Feliche by flourishing a letter which he pretends to have received from Rossaline. He asserts that she has ended the billet-doux thus: "From her that is devoted to thee in the most private sweets of love. Rossaline." Such an impudent falsehood gives Feliche a chance to unmask the gull. Snatching the letter from him, he shows the audience that it is only a bill from Castilio's tailor." Then Feliche gives up the last pretense of being a philosophical critic of any sort. He falls upon the fraudulent courtier and with blows drives him from the stage.

(Feliche's violence causes the disintegration of all the rôles he has essayed—even that of wit-intriguer and agent of exposure.) The principal duty of this third dramatic office was artfully to manipulate Castilio into a prolonged display of his pretensions to irresistible attraction for the ladies. But Feliche no sooner succeeds in carefully setting a scene for that purpose than he disrupts it by driving the central figure off the stage with a word and a blow. Marston obviously could not resist the impulse to push Feliche aside and to appear himself, under thin disguise, in his own familiar part of Juvenalian satirist. By so doing he showed that he had not yet learned to tame his satiric spirit to the indirect and impersonal methods of drama.

In the case of Balurdo, another of Rossaline's suitors, Feliche exercises none of his offices of commentator and exposé. Balurdo is a country gull, Castilio's zany, whom, mistaking him for a true exquisite, he adopts as his model in speech and action. In his misplaced admiration and imitation of another humorous character, he is like Stephano [Mr. Stephen], in *Every Man in His Humor*, and Sogliardo, in *Every Man Out*. His attempts to compose a poem, even with the aid ironically given by his page Dildo, result in palpable mental agony. And his effort to speak the ornate language of euphuism is clearly abortive:

<sup>1</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 65-67 (*Works*, I, 52).

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 69-104, *passim* (*Works*, I, 52-53).

You know the stone called *lapis*; the nearer it comes to the fire, the hotter it is: . . . and love, the nigher it is to the flame, the more remote (there's a word, remote!) the more remote it is from the frost."<sup>30</sup>

A second source of Balurdo's folly is his naïve admiration of his own figure and his own clothes. This ridiculous conceit is the theme of the best scene of farcical derision in the play. He enters walking backwards while he gazes into a mirror held by his page. At each step he prinks and preens himself and invites flattery, which the little rascal utters in "great swarths," interposing an insulting aside to the audience whenever he can. Flavia and Rossaline are at hand to parody and stimulate his folly into extravagance. Feliche lets the elaborate pageant of idiocy sweep by without making any further observation than "Rare sport, rare sport! A female fool, and a female flatterer."<sup>31</sup>

In this scene Balurdo is clearly neither exposed nor deflated. Indeed, his humour of gentility arouses his enthusiasm and stimulates his gaiety almost to the end of the drama. He is bustling off to court when Feliche encounters him for the last time, and hears him tell how he may be recognized among the throng of courtiers:

If you see one in a yellow taffeta doublet, cut upon carnation velure, . . . that's I, that's I."<sup>32</sup>

Feliche's only comment is, "Very good: farewell." He never has another opportunity to berate or to humiliate Balurdo, but permits him to walk out of the play unchecked by any direct censure or ridicule, apparently free to dwell forever in an Elysium compounded of energetic pride and self-satisfaction.

Perhaps Marston's reason for allowing Balurdo to escape satiric correction is to be found in a remark of Feliche's, at the beginning of the scene in which Balurdo postures before a mirror:

More fools, more rare fools! O, for time and place, long enough, and large enough, to act these fools! . . . if the plat could bear it."<sup>33</sup>

This sounds like the author's confession that his hybrid dramatic form does not give him space in which to develop adequately the satiric aspects of the play. He has too much other business to finish. Perhaps that is why he exposed and deflated Castilio before sufficiently

<sup>30</sup>V, i, 229-35 (*Works*, I, 86).

<sup>31</sup>III, ii, 120-65, *passim* (*Works*, I, 54-56).

<sup>32</sup>V, i, 81-89 (*Works*, I, 79).

<sup>33</sup>III, ii, 120-23 (*Works*, I, 54).

exploiting the comic possibilities of the courtier's foibles, and also why he thoroughly displayed the follies of Balurdo but neglected to purge him.

Careful examination of the other "humorous" suitors of Rossaline would reveal no additional characteristics of the dramatic methods which Marston employs in this play. Alberto represents a type familiar to many forms of Elizabethan literature—the self-consciously despondent lover,

Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad  
Made to his mistress' eyebrow.

Marston had devoted one of the poems of *The Scourge of Villainy* to "Inamorato, Curio," and other abject worshipers of their mistresses.<sup>4</sup> Alberto is like Curio in being driven by the fancied scorn of his mistress into a melancholy desire for death. The taunts which Feliche levels at Alberto are a mere repetition of Marston's expressed scorn of Curio or of a similarly infatuated Phrigio. The other lovers of Rossaline have minor parts in the play. They are Matzagente, whom we have shown to be a Spanish braggart, and Galeatzo, a boorish, poltroonish lover, like Thurio and his forebears in Italian comedy. They receive no significant attention from Feliche.

Rossaline herself takes over the office of derisive commentator upon their follies. Sometimes, as already suggested, she adopts the methods of a buffoon as completely as did Carlo Buffone. She does so in her character sketch of Matzagente, which is a mere collection of mordant similes flung out with no sense of moderation. In fact it is the extravagant abandon of her speech that provokes the laughter:

He is made like a tilting-staff; and looks  
For all the world like an o'er-roasted pig:  
A great tobacco-taker too, that's flat;  
For his eyes look as if they had been hung  
In the smoke of his nose.<sup>5</sup>

Her replies to his feeble attempts at wit are calculated insults, phrased in the same unrestrained manner.

*Mat.* O, lady, the glow-worm figurates my valour, which shineth brightest in most dark, dismal, and horrid achievements.

*Ros.* Or rather, your glow-worm represents your wit, which only

<sup>4</sup>Satire 8 (*Works*, III, 354-62).

<sup>5</sup>I, i, 123-27 (*Works*, I, 23).

seems to have fire in it, though indeed 'tis but an *ignis fatuus*, and shines only in the dark dead night of fools' admiration."

Such speeches would seem to break down the dramatic pattern of witty woman and wooer, except that Marston has made Rosaline's chief characteristic the impudent freedom of her speech. Her mental agility serves her delight at wounding her foolish suitors. She would regard as a compliment Castilio's opinion that "her wit stings, blisters, galls off the skin." Her ability to make every one of her admirers dance to her piping, entertains her with a sense of power. "O, your fool is your only servant," she cries. Because she can keep all of her followers in a state of bewilderment, she rejoices in their numbers.

One form of her wit is libertine speech, which probably does not reflect similar conduct. At least, she seems to be a realist in matters of sex. She has no romantically vague ideas about marriage, preferring to anticipate, in her thoughts, its physical delights. She repeatedly expresses her preference for a husband of sexual competence. In her role of confidante to Mellida, she advises her to choose for a husband a "*Paradizo dell madonne contento*"—a man who will fill her arms. Professing a belief in amorous adventure, she flippantly promises the woebegone Alberto that she will love him tonight. When he asks, "But whom to-morrow?", she replies with airy cynicism, "Faith, as the toy puts me in the head."

She thus gradually reveals herself as a personality completely unrelated to any role of commentator. She grows into the stature of the first representative of a dramatic type which was to prove indispensable to writers of comedy for the next hundred years. She becomes the woman whose wit depends on her frank and flippant attitude toward sex. Her freedom from old-fashioned rules of female decorum makes her the conversational equal of the male libertines, whose ideas have been derived from Latin amatory poets, and their imitators in the Renaissance. Yet her wildness never escapes from words into deeds, and is entertaining rather than reprehensible. Her lovers offer so little worthy resistance to her essays at wit that no brilliantly phrased sex-duel, such as later writers developed, results. She is intellectual mistress in all her encounters with her suitors. Once Feliche, after watching her prink elaborately before her mirror, does call her a "female fool." But he never elaborates the text, so

that he makes no effort to render her ridiculous to the audience. In her own world she never wanders so far from her original business of comment as to become an object of derision. But, like Feliche, she is too easily diverted from her purely satiric office.

This dereliction of their critical duties on the part of Feliche and Rossaline largely explains why the satiric machinery in the *First Part of Antonio and Mellida* is much less effective than that in *Every Man Out of His Humor*. When Marston began playwriting he possessed no detailed knowledge of Jonson's earliest comical satire. At least he employed none of the effective principles of construction there developed. His comico-satiric devices were largely imitations of the conventions which had appeared in earlier comedies written by both Italians and Englishmen and of the methods which Chapman and Jonson had developed in their "humour" comedies. He was particularly indebted to the form which the latter had devised in *Every Man in His Humor*.

For all these reasons, Marston in the *First Part of Antonio and Mellida* made no important contribution to the development of a new type of satiric play. He huddled the whole of his ridicule into the subplot of a drama the main concern of which was the narration of a melodramatic romance. Therefore he did not have time to solidify his satiric forms or to clarify his satiric objectives. The all-important Feliche was given so many duties that his philosophical and ethical point of view was obscured and he was rendered unable to complete his essential business of exhibiting, exposing, and correcting the fools. Under the strain of divided loyalties his dramatic character disintegrates. He frequently submerges his individuality in that of his creator. Then he repeats the savage reprimands that Marston had cried out in his formal satires. These expressions of moral fervor and disgust with evil do not serve well the purposes of comedy. On the other hand, Feliche's inability to effect the exposure of every one of the gulls allows the spirit of satire to be lost in morally irresponsible merriment. Moreover, Rossaline's escape from her obligations to describe and deride, into an unsubstantial world of her own wit and badinage, contributes to the same triumph of gaiety.

Hence, in Marston's first drama, the two essential ingredients of comical satire are seldom fused. His satiric impulse does not remain

dominant. Consequently, instead of bending the play to its purposes, he succeeds often in merely overcomplicating an already confused mixture of dramatic types and artistic objectives.

## II. *Antonio's Revenge*

*Antonio's Revenge* cannot, by any stretch of the imagination, be regarded as a comical satire. A sequel to *Antonio and Mellida*, it was probably written during the winter of 1599-1600.<sup>77</sup> It proves to be a Senecan tragedy of revenge. G. B. Harrison<sup>78</sup> describes it as a "direful contrast" to the earlier romance. Yet some of the gulls ridiculed in *Antonio and Mellida* reappear in this play and, although Feliche does not, Antonio has taken over some of his duties as commentator. For these reasons *Antonio's Revenge* deserves brief consideration.

Marston is careful, at the very beginning, to prepare the audience for something totally unlike *Antonio and Mellida*. The prologue seems to have been pronounced, first, during the winter. Marston takes advantage of the fact, to put everyone in the proper mood for tragedy.

O now, methinks, a sullen tragic scene  
Would suit the time with pleasing congruence.

· · · · · if a breast  
· · · · · Nail'd to the earth with grief; if any heart  
Pierc'd through with anguish pant within this ring;  
If there be any blood whose heat is choked  
And stifled with true sense of misery;  
If ought of these strains fill this consort up—  
Th'arrive most welcome.<sup>79</sup>

After that horrific announcement, much admired by Charles Lamb, the "tragedy of blood" unfolds its dismal length. The time is the dead of night. Piero enters unbraced, his arms bare and smeared with blood. In one hand he carries a gory poinard; in the other, a torch. He is followed by his wicked minion, Strotzo. They have together poisoned Andrugio, Antonio's father and the husband of Maria, for

<sup>77</sup>Its alternative title was *The Second Part of the History of Antonio and Mellida*. For discussion of the date, see Small, *Stage-Quarrel*, p. 92, and Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, III, 429-30.

<sup>78</sup>*Shakespeare at Work, 1592-1603* (London, 1933), p. 194.

<sup>79</sup>The Prologue, ll. 7-8, 21-27 (*Works*, I, 99-100).



whose hand Piero had been an unsuccessful suitor. Besides, they have murdered Feliche, Antonio's friend, and laid him by Mellida, in her chamber, to arouse suspicion of her chastity. Andrugio's ghost reveals these horrid crimes to Antonio, who begins his program of revenge by cutting the throat of Piero's little son Julio. Then he disguises himself as Maria's fool, in order to watch events and to await further opportunities for vengeance. Finally, in collaboration with Feliche's father Pandulfo and Feliche's friend Alberto, he carries out a program of lurid murder. The conspirators appear as maskers at an entertainment planned for the eve of Piero's marriage with Maria. When the villain has seated himself at the banquet, the trio unmask themselves, bind him, insult him, pull out his tongue, show him a ragout made of the carved-up limbs of little Julio, and finally hack him to death with their swords.

We should hardly expect satire of any sort in this tragedy, more crammed with horrors than *Titus Andronicus*. Feliche's death, announced in the first line, confirms our expectations. Even the gulls whom he helped to deride in *Antonio and Mellida* seldom figure in the action. When they do, the business they are forced to conduct for the development of the tragic plot is ridiculously out of character for them. For example, the counterfeit gentleman Castilio is compelled, by his implacable creator, to help Piero strangle Strotzo. Of the gulls, Balurdo is given the best chance to continue the life of folly which he led in the earlier play. We see him, now and then, fawning upon Piero, begging to be called Sir Jeffrey Balurdo, and, above all, misusing the farfetched vocabulary he has laboriously collected. For instance, he brings a bass viol to Maria, as a gift from Piero, and presents it to her with the following speech:

Lady, with a most retort and obtuse leg,  
I kiss the curled locks of your loose hair.

His ditty, made for the occasion and described also as "very retort, and obtuse," begins:

My mistress' eye doth oil my joints,  
And makes my fingers nimble.<sup>40</sup>

But Balurdo, though encouraged in his folly by Maria, is pursued by no Feliche to attack and expose it. Instead, there appears the ghost of Andrugio, which sits on the edge of the widow's bed and

<sup>40</sup>III, ii, 19-39, *passim* (*Works*, I, 152-53).

carries the audience swiftly back into the world of Senecan horror. The other gulls come on the scene only to posture briefly in an atmosphere fatal to any prolonged display of social affectation.

But Morse Allen<sup>4</sup> believes that Antonio takes over Feliche's duties and that in exercising them he becomes the prototype of Marston's most effective satiric *raisonneur*, the Malcontent. Feliche, the honest man in a world of knaves, has his voice deepened and the range of his discontent extended, when it serves for the most miraculous organ of Antonio, the Hamlet-like hero overwhelmed with misfortune.

True, Antonio has much grief to express, and it stimulates, after the manner of his Senecan kind, philosophical disquisitions liberally salted with Latin quotations from the pseudo stoic's works. Though he professes to be searching for calm, he frequently breaks out into passionate cries of unrelieved melancholy, like the following:

. . . . . The curse of Heaven rains  
In plagues unlimited through all his\* days:  
His mature age grows only mature vice,  
And ripens only to corrupt and rot  
The budding hopes of infant modesty.<sup>5</sup>

\*man's

But nothing of Feliche's spirit or dramatic function is discernible in utterances of that sort. They neither deride nor attack any definite individual or specific folly. However, when Antonio disguises himself "in a fool's habit, with a little toy of a walnut shell, and soap to make bubbles," he does promise to become a substitute for Feliche, and explains that the roles of fool and satiric critic have many points in common. Alberto is sure that Antonio ought, rather, to have donned

Some habit of a spitting critic, whose mouth  
Voids nothing but gentile and unvulgar  
Rheum of censure.<sup>6</sup>

But Antonio answers that such a disguise would be but "the very flesh of solid folly"—that the fool, being a kind of licensed satirist, has the best of chances to spy and comment upon his enemies.

O, he hath a patent of immunities  
Confirm'd by custom, seal'd by policy,  
As large as spacious thought.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup>"Satire of John Marston, pp. 129-30.

<sup>5</sup>III, i, 113-17 (*Works*, I, 147).

<sup>6</sup>IV, i, 4-6 (*Works*, I, 157).

<sup>7</sup>LI. 13-15.

In his unequalled opportunities for observation, the fool possesses another advantage: he habitually views all things with that passionless objectivity or "studious contemplation" which must form the ideal point of view of the authentic satirist.

He is not capable of passion;  
Wanting the power of distinction,  
He bears an unturned sail with every wind:  
Blow east, blow west, he stirs his course alike."

But Antonio is given no chance to exercise the office for which his qualifications have been thus thoroughly certified. He observes villainy, but makes no extended comments upon it. The only long speech that he delivers, while in his cap and bells, is an expression of acquiescence in the decrees of omnipotence and a declaration of vengeance. This soliloquy is in the poet's finest imaginative vein—the product of what he calls his "abstruse and synowy faculties"—but it displays none of his critical or satiric faculties. The truth is that Antonio's part in the plot could be performed only by what Miss Ellis-Fermor calls a "Senecan robot." Such a revenger might appropriately become speculative and philosophical in his utterances, but in Feliche's role he would have been ridiculous. (Marston saw that the disguised observer of wickedness might effectively play the part of satiric commentator. He devoted a dialogue of considerable length to making his critical point. But then he found that, in a bloody revenge play, he could not avail himself of these services of the fool. Morse Allen is clearly mistaken in believing that *Antonio's Revenge* is of importance in the history of Marston's efforts to find effective dramatic forms for his satiric impulses. In fact, the play hardly deserves the passing notice here given it.

### III. *Jack Drum's Entertainment*

As a play, *Jack Drum's Entertainment* has no claims to distinction. Marston wrote it, evidently on order, immediately after he had completed the two parts of *Antonio and Mellida*. It was composed for the new company of the children of Paul's, which opened its doors either during the last part of the year 1599 or the early months of 1600.<sup>46</sup> The revival of old plays (which constituted its

<sup>46</sup>IV, i, 38-41 (*Works*, I, 158).

<sup>46</sup>Cf. H. N. Hillebrand, *The Child Actors* (University of Illinois "Studies in Language and Literature," XI, Nos. 1 and 2; Urbana, 1926), p. 208. I accept, without

first offerings) having failed to attract its public," Marston was engaged to provide the boy actors with a drama that would please the taste of the select audiences which gathered at Blackfriars. He apparently executed the commission promptly, and by the spring of 1600 had *Jack Drum's Entertainment* ready for presentation. The hodge-podge of undeveloped romantic, comic, and satiric motifs which makes up the drama represents Marston's ingenious effort to discover just what form of stage entertainment would bring satisfactory receipts into the company's exchequer. Morse Allen believes that, in a play written to "win the favor of the upper classes and if possible the queen . . . satire would have been out of place."<sup>4</sup> Unless Mr. Allen uses "satire" in the sense of "lampoon," his statement is not accurate. All the evidence shows that the patrons of the "private theatres" took peculiar delight in social and ethical satire.

However, there is no doubt that Marston stuffed his play with every sort of stage entertainment that he thought would appeal to his audience. As in *Antonio and Mellida*, he devotes a substantial part of his piece to the complications of a romantic tale. It describes the adventures of two true lovers, whom the incredible villain, "Mamon the Usurer, with a great nose,"<sup>5</sup> seeks to destroy. The three are manipulated into crude melodramatic situations, utterly devoid of reality. This part of the plot is unrelated to the satiric elements in the play and fortunately need not be here retold.

Much of the rest of the comedy is devoted to derision of the gulls and fools. To effect that purpose Marston employs every type of

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laboring the point, the opinion of the best critics that the style is undoubtedly Marston's. Professor Felix Schelling expresses my view when he writes, "The unusual vocabulary and crabbed manner of this comedy in parts betray Marston's authorship beyond peradventure of a doubt." (*Elizabethan Drama, 1558-1642* [ca. 1908], I, 483.) "The evidence for this statement is to be found in the speech of Brabant senior about the children of Paul's:

"I and they had good Playes, but they produce  
Such mustie fopperies of antiquitie,  
And do not sute the humorous ages backs  
With cloathes in fashion."

(*Jacke Drums Entertainment: or The Comedie Of  
Pasquill and Katherine. As it hath bene sundry  
times plaide by the Children of Powles* [London,  
1601], Act V, sig. H3v.)

<sup>4</sup>*Satire of John Marston*, p. 137.

<sup>5</sup>He is thus described in the list of "The names of all the men and women, that Act this Play." (Sig. I3v.)

dramatic ridicule that he knew. He pitches some of it in a wildly farcical key. An instance is the device by which he enables Wini-fride, the *amorosa's* maid, to cool the lust of two of her lovers, Jack Drum and "Mounsier John fo de King." She persuades Jack to allow himself to be tied up in a sack, in the belief that thus concealed he is to be conveyed to her chamber. Then she gulls Monsieur John into believing that she herself is in the sack and that he can carry her off to serve his pleasure in his own bedroom. But, when he opens the sack, out jumps Jack and gives him a sound thrashing. The trick seems to reform Monsieur John, who cries, "Me ame trooke dead wit greife, de cock of my humore is downe, and me may hang my selfe vor a Vench." Monsieur John's admission that he has been driven "out of his humour" might persuade an unwary critic that he has witnessed a satiric purgation. But the methods are so farcical that they hold the silly little exposure beyond hailing distance of genuine dramatic satire. Besides, Monsieur John's next search for lust is completely successful.

Sir Edward Fortune is perhaps the most entertaining character in the play. Sir Edmund Chambers thinks that he may have been "Edward Alleyn, who was building the Fortune [Theatre] in 1600."<sup>10</sup> He is derided by the simple methods developed by Chapman and Jonson in their "humour" comedies. He discloses his idiosyncrasy without waiting for the stimulation of any wit-intriguer. Nor does his conduct need elucidation or censure from an official commentator. His volatility and fatuous cheerfulness are obvious from the start. He escapes from every disagreeable situation into factitious heartiness, whence he calls for organized gaiety. For example, when his daughter Katherine hears that her lover Pasquil is dead, she rushes off the stage in a frenzy of grief and becomes mad. Sir Edward at first shows some anxiety and gives commands that Pasquil be sought everywhere. No sooner has he issued these orders than Pasquil appears, explaining that he has merely feigned death. Sir Edward expresses briefly a wish that he had not practiced this form of deceit, as the act has resulted in the loss of his child. However, he has no intention of allowing the catastrophe long to darken his habitual jollity. He cries:

Broach me a fresh Butt of *Canary Sacke*,

<sup>10</sup>*Elizabethan Stage*, IV, 21.

Lets sing, drink, sleep, for thats the best reliefe:  
To drowne all care, and overwhelme all grieffe.<sup>61</sup>

Such a speech makes Sir Edward immediately ridiculous—that is, Marston dramatizes his folly without availing himself of any of the complicated methods of exhibition and exposure developed by comical satire.

In his derision of the crowd of gulls who court Camelia (Sir Edward's second daughter, the "*Hygate Mammet*"), Marston continues the methods of construction he had employed in *Antonio and Mellida*. The fools are part of the same dramatic pattern, of a witty woman and her ridiculous suitors. They represent, too, approximately the same kinds of social folly. John Ellis assumes the pose of a malcontent. Like Labesha in Chapman's *An Humorous dayes Myrth*, who "is grown marvelous malecontent, upon some amorous disposition of his mistres," he affects melancholy. Like Nym in Shakespeare's *Henry V*, he also "hath heard that men of few words are the best men," and therefore he tries to be oracular. Brabant senior, in the first ensemble scene, asks, "What makes you so melancholy?," and he answers, "I do not use to answere questions." Brabant junior wants to know what he is thinking of now, and he replies, "I do not use to thinke."<sup>62</sup> When he woos, this affected simplicity assumes a quaint form. "As the Countrey mayd crieth to her Cowe to milke her, or as the Travailer knocketh with his Hostes for a reckning, even so do I call to thee ô Mistris."<sup>63</sup> Camelia throws him a favor out of the window, which provokes Brabant junior to beat him. He runs away with loud cries of "Helpe, helpe," and shows himself a wretched coward.

Ellis' rivals for the favor of Camelia are Puffe and Brabant junior. The former is a fool of compliment. Brabant junior paints an elaborate satiric portrait of him in the following terms:

Then theres . . . profound tounge Maister *Puffe*, he that hath a perpetuities of complement, he whose phrases are as neatly deckt as my Lord Majors Hensmen, he whose throat squeakes like a treble Organ, and speakes as small and shrill, as the Irish-men crie Pip, fine Pip. And when his period comes not roundly off, takes tole of the tenth haire of his *Bourbon* locke: as thus. Sweete Sir, repete

<sup>61</sup>Act II, sig. D4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>62</sup>Act I, sig. C.

<sup>63</sup>Act II, sig. D3.

me as a (*Puffe*) selected spirit borne to be the admirer, of your never inough admired (*Puffe*).<sup>54</sup>

This idiosyncrasy of puffing, in the midst of his talk, as a sign of self-importance, whether or not accompanied by the exhalation of tobacco smoke, becomes almost his sole contribution to the comedy of the piece. So he deteriorates into the lowest form of "humour" figure—one whose entire nature has been reduced to a mannerism.

Brabant junior is, like Alberto in *Antonio and Mellida*, a conventionally dejected lover. In spite of Camelia's scorn, he persists in his amorous slavery to her.

How not presume to love or fancie you?  
Hart, I will love you, by this light I will  
Whether you will or no, I'll love you still.<sup>55</sup>

The lady's fourth foolish lover is the farcically lecherous Frenchman, Monsieur John, whose adventure with the sack has been described. Camelia herself is a ridiculous creature. She is stupidly eager to bestow her affections upon any successful pretender to gentility who offers, and veers wildly from one gull to another. Her maid Winifride characterizes her inconstancy as "just like a whiffe of Tabacco, no sooner in at the mouth, but out at the nose." Winifride's recommendation of a fool for a husband kindles her mistress' imagination:

Beleeve me wench, thy words have fired me,  
I'll lay me downe upon a banke of Pinkes,  
And dreame uppont.<sup>56</sup>

Camelia apparently thinks this amorous languor is approved behavior for a lady of high society.

A drama thus largely occupied with farce and simple forms of incidental ridicule naturally reveals little growth in Marston's command of the constructive principles of satiric comedy. However, the play is interesting from that very point of view, because Marston develops and illustrates what he conceives to be the distinction between (the true and the false comico-satiric attitude.) Brabant senior represents the inept critic. We at first assume that he is to be the official expositor and corrector of the gulls. He assembles most of

<sup>54</sup>Act I, sig. B4<sup>r</sup>&v.

<sup>55</sup>Act III, sig. E4.

<sup>56</sup>Act I, sig. B3.

them at what he calls a "feast of fooles," where by loosing his wit upon them he can arouse derisive laughter at their expense. In a similar scene in *Every Man in His Humor* Bobadilla [Bobadill], Stephano [Stephen], and Matheo [Matthew] gather at Thorello's [Kitely's] house and are then ridiculed and exposed. A like purgation would have taken place, here, if Brabant senior had been a proper agent of satire. But he is satisfied merely to exhibit the gulls, pointing out their follies with an air of competent superiority, as though each was a strange beast in his private menagerie. His manner of introducing Puffe is typical.

You shall see his humour, I pray you bee familiar with this Gentleman maister *Puffe*, he is a man of a well growne spirit, richly worth your. I assure you, ha, ha, ha.<sup>87</sup>

His method of stimulating the fools to characteristic display is to insult them. Thus, his rejoinder to Planet's remark to Ellis, "*John*, be my Ward *John*, faith Ile give thee two coates a yeare and be my Foole," is, "He shall be your Foole, and you shall be his Coxe-come. Ha, ha, I have a simple wit, ha, ha."<sup>88</sup> Toward the end of his show he utters a paean of delight at the rare sport he is deriving from it.

Why this is sport imperiall, by my Gentry, I would spend fortie Crownes, for such an other feast of fooles. Ha, Ha. . . . Why tis the recreation of my Intellect, . . . these are my zanyes, I fill their paunches, they feed my pleasures, I use them as my fooles faith, ha, ha.<sup>89</sup>

Brabant senior is also a severe, almost a railing, critic both of his literary contemporaries and of the repertory of the recently reorganized children of Paul's. Brabant junior, in praising the audience which gathered at the new private theatre, introduces the following dialogue:

*Bra. Ju.* Tis a good gentle Audience, and I hope the Boyes  
Will come one day into the Court of requests.

*Bra. Sig.* I and they had good Playes, but they produce  
Such mustie fopperies of antiquitie,  
And do not sute the humorous ages backs  
With cloathes in fashion.

*Pla.* Well *Brabant* well, you will be censuring still,  
There lyes a Jest in steep will whip you fort't.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>87</sup>*Ibid.*, sig. B4v.

<sup>88</sup>*Ibid.*, sigs. Cv-C2.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid.*, sig. C.

<sup>90</sup>Act V, sig. H3v.



This is not judicial criticism, but very near downright detraction. The same impulse to extravagant derision seizes Brabant senior when he expresses his opinion of various authors. He employs as his weapon, then, the mordant similes that constituted almost the entire armory of the typical buffoon.

*Bra. Ju.* Brother how like you of our moderne witts? How like you the new poet *Mellidus*?

*Bra. Sig.* A slight bubling spirit, a Corke, a Huske.

*Pla.* How like you *Musus* fashion in his carriage?

*Bra. Sig.* O filthily, he is as blunt as *Pawles*.

*Bra. Ju.* What thinke you of the Lines of *Decius*? Writes he not a good cordiall sappie stile?

*Bra. Sig.* A surreinde<sup>a</sup> Jaded wit, but a rubbes on.

*Pla.* *Brabant* thou art like a paire of Ballance[s], Thou wayest all saving thy selfe.

*Bra. Sig.* Good faith, troth is, they are all Apes & gulls, Vile imitating spirits, dry heathy Turffes.<sup>a</sup>

In his role as critic, as well as his indulgence in insulting jokes at the expense of the gulls, Brabant senior prostitutes his wit to buffoonery and base detraction. Such a figure is an appropriate object of derision.

His propensity to stupid practical jokes brings its just punishment. He devises a plan for disappointing the lust of Monsieur John and thus exposing it to hilarious ridicule. He invites the lecherous Frenchman to his residence, pretending that it is a house of assignation and that he is a pander and his wife a whore. When Brabant senior concocts this scheme, Planet cries out:

The wicked Jest be turnde on his owne head,  
Pray God he may be kindly Cuckoled.<sup>a</sup>

Planet's prayer is answered at the end of the last act. Monsieur John enters, exclaiming over the charms of "de most delicate plumpe vench" to whom Brabant senior has introduced him. Brabant at first attempts to laugh off Monsieur John's report, and then to laugh off his realization that he is himself a cuckold. But Planet crowns him with the coronet of cuckolds—a pair of horns—and then delivers a long speech of censure on his conduct.

Why doest thou not well deserve to be thus usde?  
Why should'st thou take felicitie to gull  
Good honest soules, and in thy arrogance

<sup>a</sup>Overridden.

<sup>a</sup>Act IV, sig. F4<sup>r</sup>&v.

<sup>a</sup>*Ibid.*, sig. G.

And glorious ostentation of thy wit,  
 Thinke God infused all perfection  
 Into thy soule alone, and made the rest  
 For thee to laugh at?

Though Brabant's folly is thus clearly exposed by a trick and anatomized by Planet, the gulled man announces no reformation:

Weare the horne? I, spite of all your teethe  
 Ile weare this Crowne, and triumph in this horne."

The scornful dismissal of the fool, with his humour still defiantly intact is, as we have seen, one of the two favorite satiric denouements.

The foregoing analysis shows that Brabant senior comes to occupy the principal place among the derided figures. That is, (Marston apparently feels that of all fools the most reprehensible is the critic who destroys the effectiveness of his office by buffoonish jesting and ill-natured detraction—fit expressions of the fatuous self-love of a crude vulgarian.)

The consensus of the best scholarly opinion is that Marston intended to ridicule Jonson through the character of Brabant senior. Small is the most explicit of those who believe in this identification. He says, "The character of Brabant the 'censurer' corresponds in every particular with that of Jonson as depicted by his enemies, and must inevitably refer to him."<sup>95</sup> Brabant, he explains, was like their distorted conception of Jonson in being puffed up with conceit and in deriving great intellectual delight from contemptuous ridicule of fools. Horace, who represents Jonson in *Satiro-mastix*, is called a "gull-groper," and that is precisely the part assigned to Brabant in *Jack Drum's Entertainment*. Brabant was like Jonson, too, in the contemptuous superiority with which he regarded his contemporaries among the poets and dramatists. Small believes that the bestowal of the horn and Brabant's boast that he will "triumph in this horne" also suggested Jonson; for horns were the conventional mark not only of the cuckold but also of the satirist who, as we have seen, was regarded as the lineal descendant of the "satyrs." To prove that such use of the horn was a conventional method of deriding a satirist, Small refers to the point in *Satiro-mastix* at which Horace and Bubo are "pul'd in by th'hornes bound both like Satyrs."<sup>96</sup>

<sup>95</sup>Act V, sig. I3.

<sup>96</sup>*Stage-Quarrel*, p. 97.

<sup>97</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 99.

The cuckolding, however, is usually considered no part of the direct lampooning of Jonson. That disgraceful incident, says Simpson, could hardly have been "meant for Jonson, even in those days of reckless misstatement, when the satirist did not attempt a likeness, however caricatured, but thought himself most successful when he heaped together the foulest abuse."<sup>77</sup> Yet Sir Edmund Chambers asserts that the cuckolding "is based upon a story narrated by Jonson to Drummond as one in which he had played the active, not the passive, part."<sup>78</sup> The passage in Drummond to which Chambers refers is the following:

In his youth given to venerie. . . . He said two accidents strange befell him: one, that a man made his own wyfe to court him, whom he enjoyed two yeares erre he knew of it, and one day finding them by chance, was passingly delighted with it.<sup>79</sup>

This example of Jonson's youthful "venerie" would probably not have been so widely known that the oblique reference to it would have been a recognizable personal allusion even to the special audience of Blackfriars. Planet's attitude toward Brabant senior is such as to make it probable that the latter had been burdened with some of the sins of a personal foe or antagonist of the author. Planet, several times in the course of the play, launches against the elder Brabant's self-love and the haughty, superior attitude that he assumes toward those he censures, a much more personal and extended attack than the dramatic situation warrants. The explanation that he gives to Brabant junior of his hopes that his elder brother will be cuckolded is an example:

. . . . I do hate these bumbaste wits,  
That are puft up with arrogant conceit  
Of their owne worth, as if *Omnipotence*  
Had hoysed them to such unequald height,  
That they survaide our spirits with an eye  
Only create to censure from above,  
When good soules they do nothing but reprove.<sup>80</sup>

In such passages one easily recognizes a personal distaste which no

<sup>77</sup>Richard Simpson, *The School of Shakspeare* (2 vols.; London, 1878), II, 130.

<sup>78</sup>*Elizabethan Stage*, IV, 21.

<sup>79</sup>*Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden*, ed. R. F. Patterson (London, 1923), p. 27.

<sup>80</sup>Act IV, sig. H.

satirist normally feels for a dramatic representative of a general vice or folly.

For these reasons we may safely assume that Marston made Brabant senior a character in which he could express a measure of his irritation toward his fellow dramatist. Further, one may say that he expected at least part of his audience to detect in this stage-figure certain of Jonson's shortcomings. But that is quite a different intellectual process from identifying the two. Even the subtler form of personal lampoon would have justified Jonson's assertion to Drummond that the beginning of his quarrels with his fellow dramatist was that "Marston represented him in the stage."<sup>1</sup> The recognition of Jonson's traits in some, but certainly not all, of Brabant's actions would have added richness and point to the spectators' amusement, and therein lies the play's literary importance, rather than in its marking a stage in the personal quarrel between Jonson and Marston. The figure derided is not Ben Jonson, my masters, but a satirist who misconceives his critical function by contaminating it with the laughter of a buffoon and the personal petulance of a detractor—such a person as Ben Jonson often seems to be.

Planet, who plays an important part in the humiliation and correction of Brabant, is the true critic. He represents Marston's point of view. His name derives its significance from a popular conception of the contemporary science of cosmography. This was the notion that corruption and change visited only those regions of the universe upon which the moon cast its shadow. All the regions beyond her influence were changeless and incorruptible. The planets were, of course, denizens of this diviner air. Hence the name, applied to a man, would suggest that his judgments were not subject to mutation and fluctuation, but were firmly anchored to the eternal verities. Just because Planet is consequently far above the ordinary world, young Brabant distrusts his competence fairly to judge normal human activity:

O you are buried in Philosophie,  
And there intombd in supernaturalls,  
You are dead to native pleasures life."<sup>2</sup>

But to be aloof from the human scene was to possess emotional balance as settled as that which Feliche, in *Antonio and Mellida*,

<sup>1</sup>*Conversations*, p. 27.

<sup>2</sup>Act I, sig. B3<sup>v</sup>.

falsely imagined that his stoicism had given him. Planet is even more self-assured. He cries:

. . . . . ô that the soules of men  
Were temperate like mine, then Natures painte  
Should not triumph o're our infirmities."<sup>73</sup>

The judgments of such a critic would be regarded by all who heard them pronounced, as true and righteous altogether. He tries to cure young Brabant of his infatuation for Camelia by subjecting the lover's illusion to the acid test of realism.

*Plan.* . . . I wonder why thou lov'st her?

*Bra.* Love hath no reason.

*Pla.* Then is love a beast.

*Bra.* O my *Camelia* is love it selfe.

*Pla.* The diuel she is: Hart her lips looke like a dride Neats-tongue: her face as richly yeallow, as the skin of a cold Custard, and her mind as setled as the feet of bald pated time."<sup>74</sup>

Later in the same dialogue Planet pronounces trenchant judgment upon each gull as Brabant paints his portrait. But Planet proposes to laugh his fill at their absurdities. "In, in, in, in, I long to burst my sides and tyer my spleene with laughter."<sup>75</sup>

In Camelia's reformation he takes an active part. When he hears her scorn Brabant, telling him that she has higher ideas of a husband, he scolds her for her pride and avarice.

. . . . . Why should you be proud,  
And looke on none but Weathercocks forsooth?  
O you shall have a thousand pound a yeare!  
Bar Ladie thats a bumming sound. But harke,  
Wilt therefore be a slave, unto a slave,  
One thats a bound Rogue unto Ignorance?

Camelia rejects his exhortation by calling him "Rude uncivile Clowne," and Planet replies, "Tut raile not at me, turn your eie upon the leprosie of your own judgement, loath it, hate it, scorn it, and love this yong Gentleman, who is a Foole in nothing but in loving thee."<sup>76</sup>

For the sake of her reformation he even plays briefly the part of wit-intriguer. He bribes Winifride to stimulate Camelia to a point

<sup>73</sup>Act IV, sig. G4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>74</sup>Act I, sig. B3<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>75</sup>*Ibid.*, sig. B4<sup>v</sup>.

<sup>76</sup>Act III, sigs. E3<sup>v</sup>-E4.

where she fancies she is in love with him. He has her involved in the situation in order that he can cure her of her inveterate amorosity by scorning her and violently rejecting her advances.

*Pla.*

Wert thou as rich as is the Oceans wombe,  
As beautious as the glorious frame of heaven,  
Yet would I loath thee worse then varnisht skulles,  
Whose ryvels are dawbd up with plaistering painte.

*Came.* O Rockie spirit.

*Pla.* Breathe not in vaine, I hate thy flatterings,  
Detest thy purest elegance of speech,  
Worse then I do the Croaking of a Toade.<sup>77</sup>

Camelia crawls upon her knees, fawns upon him, and orders a song with the viols (music being the food of love), but in vain. Planet tells her that he is "the scourge of light inconstancie." Later in the play the gullish lovers, in imitation of Planet's rejection, publicly refuse her advances, until the girl in desperation cries:

"M. *Brabant*, M. *Planet*, M. *Ellis*, faith Ile have any."<sup>78</sup>

They all turn their backs upon her, and her father points the moral of their refusal: "This is the plague of light inconstancie."

Planet, here more clearly than on any other occasion, is the agent of the author's satire. As a moralist he is completely emancipated from the fashions and follies of the moment and views them as moral blemishes. They exasperate him so thoroughly that, despite his boasted emotional control, they force from him utterances hot with scorn and detestation. Therefore, whenever he exercises his duties as commentator and castigator, the structure and the spirit of the drama are like those of comical satire.

*Jack Drum's Entertainment*, farrago of incongruous elements though it is, moves definitely toward a dramatic form suited to the spirit of satire. Virtually every character in the play is a representative of some social abuse or ridiculous personal folly attacked in Marston's formal satires. The dramatis personae descend from Mammon the Usurer, through the gulls, down to the briefly appearing Timothy Twedle, a harmless old fool, "mawdelin drunk" and prone to senile tears, who laments the loss of his erotic power. Though the author employs various methods of castigating the fools and knaves, he

<sup>77</sup>Act IV, sig. G4.

<sup>78</sup>Act V, sig. Iv.

closes his drama with two moderately effective scenes of their exposure. These scenes are thus the result of satiric intention, but the author's execution is such as to make them comic. Satire has therefore clearly gained the upper hand in its contest with the romantic plot.

The originality which Marston shows in this drama lies in the prominence which he gives to the derision of the inept and unworthy satirist, Brabant senior. Marston may have stressed ridicule of him partly in order to satisfy a grudge against Jonson, but must also have felt that to establish the satiric attitude most nearly harmonious with the comic spirit was a matter of fundamental importance for the success of the new dramatic form—as indeed it was. Against the false attitude of Brabant senior, the critical virtues of Ned Planet shine. He is a great improvement on the hysterical Feliche, whose melancholy withdrawal from the world into what he regards as measureless content, is a sign of serious emotional maladjustment. Ridicule, for Planet, is an expression, not of feelings of personal superiority, but of impatience with vice and folly. Though he is supposed to be sanely balanced and controlled and in manners a courteous young man, his distaste for stupidity and pretension is so great that he permits himself to rail at them and to take part in any intrigues which will expose and correct his humour-infected fellows. He remains, to the end of the play, a reasonable and fairly convincing character. Only when writers of comical satire created such a figure to serve as commentator, did they succeed in imposing upon the new form aesthetic unity and logical coherence."

#### IV. *What You Will*

*What You Will* was first produced in 1601. Like *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, it was probably written for the boys of Paul's."

"Harrison (*Shakespeare at Work*, p. 204) writes of *Jack Drum's Entertainment*: "There was some attempt in this unlikely farce to write comedy according to the new pattern, and Marston took the opportunity of slipping in a couple of jibes at Jonson in revenge for *Clove and Orange*." It is not clear just what Mr. Harrison means by "new pattern." He seems to have in mind comedy containing satire, particularly lampoon. At all events his reference is not to "comical satire" in any such strict sense as that term is used in the present book.

"Chambers (*Elizabethan Stage*, III, 430) points out that "the induction, with its allusions to the small size of the stage and the use of candles, excludes the possibility of an adult theatre"; and Hillebrand adds (*Child Actors*, p. 296) that "the frequent mention of feathers would alone settle" the fact that it was given at Blackfriars.

As in all his early plays, Marston chose for his main plot an action filled with excitement and surprise. The lively story is a mixture of romance, intrigue, and farce. Albano, a Venetian merchant, goes to sea, disappears, and is mistakenly thought by his wife Celia to have been killed or drowned. Having ranging social ambitions, she decides that her second husband must be of higher station than that of a "burgomasco." Hence, from among her numerous suitors, she favors a so-called "wandering knight," Laverdure, "green," as his name indicates, and a complete fop. Albano's two brothers, seeking to prevent her marriage, induce a perfumer, Francisco Soranzo, to impersonate the supposedly lost Albano. They spread news of their trick, ostensibly to allow everyone to share their joke, but really to complicate the farce in a number of succeeding scenes. For, when Albano turns up, all believe him to be only the disguised Francisco and applaud his mimetic skill. The real Albano's violent exasperation at not being believed, and even his excited stuttering, are greeted with delight as admirable imitations of the dead man's peculiarities.

The situation becomes sheer farce when both the real and the false Albano stand outside of Celia's house, clamoring for entrance, one echoing with verbal exactitude all the speeches of the other. The appearance of two Albanos does not disclose the truth, because Laverdure, a moment before the scene develops, has suggested that he will induce another rascal, a fiddler, also to impersonate Albano. The double disguise, he believes, will complicate and intensify the comic confusion, and the crowd thinks this has been contrived. Thus Albano's frantic protestations and bluster remain unresolved farce. In the final scene, he begs the Duke to right his wrongs; but, when he discovers why his brother had planned the deception, he forgives everyone who has been implicated in it and invites the entire company to an hilarious celebration of his reunion with his wife.

Marston manages to insert into the brisk farcical action much organized ridicule, and some comment animated by his own peculiar satiric spirit. The characters chosen for derision are, like the similar

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Moreover, the scene with the schoolmaster and his boys, for which there is little or no reason, shows that the company was richer in child actors than the men's organizations.



figures in *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, gullish lovers—in *What You Will*, of either Celia or her sister Meletza. They are Jacomo, the familiar fantastically melancholy lover; Laverdure the fop, whose humour is admiration of fine clothes; and Simplicius Faber, a witless, effeminate youth, whom Quadratus calls an hermaphrodite. He, gull-like, bestows all his admiration upon another counterfeit creature, Lampatho Doria. The latter fellow belongs to the same school of unworthy satirists as Brabant senior—that is, he is a kind of buffoon. He insinuates himself into the confidence of the fools only in order to use them as stimulations for his railing humour and to arouse thoughtless laughter. Quadratus, the authentic commentator, is a development of Planet. He devises original and effective methods of feeding the humours of the foolish characters and of forcing their display in full splendor. The entire dramatic and satiric implications of these elements of *What You Will* will presently be studied more particularly.

Albano's dismay and anger are usually presented as sheer farce. Yet in two of his speeches the audience is invited to sympathize with his despair. He tells them that his wife's infidelity is one manifestation of the rottenness of the age. These utterances, not entirely suitable to the immediate dramatic situation and out of the spirit of Albano's role, sound like echoes of Marston's own voice as it rang through the pages of *The Scourge of Villainy*, excoriating all the society of his day. Albano tells his page Slip that general social corruption has debased divinely instilled love to "a figment," "a comic poesy," and made sexual fidelity a mere creature of wealth and other forms of personal gain. He cries:

. . . . . The soul of man is rotten,  
Even to the core;—no sound affection.  
Our love is hollow-vaulted—stands on props  
Of circumstance, profit, or ambitious hopes!  
. . . . .  
The first pure time, the golden age is fled.  
Heaven knows I lie,—'tis now the age of gold,—  
For it all marreth, and even virtue's sold!<sup>a</sup>

Clearly, it is Marston himself who speaks these words. This is one of the few occasions when he could not resist the impulse to use

<sup>a</sup>III, ii, 53-56, 65-67 (*Works*, II, 372).

Albano as his personal mouthpiece. But he makes no sustained effort to transform the character into an official expositor or ethical commentator. Here, as G. B. Harrison says, Marston has seized an opportunity to express his own view "on the contrast between true and modern love."<sup>82</sup>

*What You Will* has been almost universally regarded as an answer to Jonson's supposed attack on Marston, in *Cynthias Revels*.<sup>83</sup> Morse Allen<sup>84</sup> goes so far as to say that, the play being thus designed for a special purpose, "Marston seems to relax his interest in dramatic effect, and slides back into his naturally satiric mood." That conception of the drama depends, first, upon the character of the induction. It indubitably contains animadversions upon Jonson's critical attitude, and more specifically upon his induction to *Every Man Out of His Humor*. Atticus, Doricus, and Philomuse are discovered on the stage, chatting together while they wait for the candles to be lighted. They talk much as did Cordatus, Asper, and Mitis in the induction to *Every Man Out of His Humor*. They discuss the carping attitude of spectators toward a play, and Philomuse breaks out in abuse of such unintelligent censure and in passionate declaration of an author's independence of it.

. . . . . Believe it, Doricus, his spirit  
Is higher blooded than to quake and pant  
At the report of Scoff's artillery.  
Shall he be crest-fall'n, if some looser brain,  
In flux of wit uncivilly befilth  
His slight composures? Shall his bosom faint,  
If drunken Censure belch out sour breath  
From Hatred's surfeit on his labour's front?<sup>85</sup>

This is the mood in which Philomuse defies all detraction, and it is clearly a lampoon of Jonson's ruthless, unrestrained manner. But Doricus interrupts the swelling strain and contradicts its import:

Now out upon't, I wonder what tight brain,  
Wrung in this custom to maintain contempt  
'Gainst common censure; to give stiff counter-buffs,

<sup>82</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 244.

<sup>83</sup>Cf. Small, *Stage-Quarrel*, pp. 110-113, for the best weighing of the identifications by Bullen (*Works of John Marston*, I, xlviii) and Fleay (*Biographical Chronicle*, II, 76). Cf. also Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, III, 430.

<sup>84</sup>*Satire of John Marston*, pp. 139-40.

<sup>85</sup>Ll. 25-32 (*Works*, II, 322).

To crack rude scorn even on the very face  
 Of better audience. . . . .  
 . . . . . know, rules of art  
 Were shaped to pleasure, not pleasure to your rules;  
 Think you, if that his scenes took stamp in mint  
 Of three or four deem'd most judicious,  
 It must enforce the world to current them,  
 That you must spit defiance on dislike?"

Here, as Small points out,<sup>77</sup> is certainly a reply to Asper's speech in the induction to *Every Man Out of His Humor*—particularly to the mood expressed in such lines as

I feare no mood stamp't in a private brow,  
 When I am pleas'd t'unmaske a publicke vice.  
 . . . . .  
 I doe not this to beg your patience,  
 Or servilely to fawne on your applause,  
 Like some drie braine, despairing in his merit."

And Marston may, too, have had in mind Jonson's famous epilogue to *Cynthias Revels*:

Ile onely speake, what I have heard him<sup>78</sup> say;  
 By God 'tis good, and if you lik't, you may."

Apparently reformed by Doricus' speeches, Philomuse admits that the play has been cast into none of the approved dramatic forms, "comedy, tragedy, pastoral, moral, nocturnal, or history," . . . "but even *What You Will*,—a slight toy, lightly composed, too swiftly finish'd, ill plotted, worse written, I fear me worst acted, and indeed *What You Will*."<sup>79</sup> This extravagantly ingratiating attitude represents a fantastically impossible conversion of the contemptuous Jonson.

The references to Jonson in the induction, and the derision of his attitude toward his public, are too pertinent to be accidental. They must be accepted as intended. However, they are all contained within the induction and could hardly have determined the character of the play which was to follow. But most critics of *What*

<sup>77</sup>Ll. 53-57, 63-68 (*ibid.*, pp. 323-24).

<sup>78</sup>*Stage-Quarrel*, pp. 105-6.

<sup>79</sup>*Every Man Out of His Humor* (1600), sigs. Bv, Bz.

<sup>80</sup>The author.

<sup>81</sup>*Cynthias Revels* (1601), sig. M2v.

<sup>82</sup>Ll. 89-94 (*Works*, II, 324-25).

*You Will* detect, in the comedy proper, far more extended derision of Jonson. They identify Lampatho Doria with him, and Quadratus with Marston himself. Before this theory can be intelligently criticized, the part which the two figures play in the action must be carefully reviewed.

Lampatho Doria first appears in company with Quadratus and Simplicius Faber. An "ill-regulated mass of incidents"<sup>1</sup> centers around these three. They bear little relation to the main plot. Least of all do they make it go, or carry out any careful program of exposing the fools. Faber is a gull, but Lampatho and Quadratus deal largely in words, which seldom take the form of verbal conflict. They are devoted to expounding and illustrating two diametrically opposed satiric attitudes.

Lampatho, being poor, is dependent for his living on the bounty of Quadratus. "He dogs me," says the latter, "and I give him scraps, and pay for his ordinary, feed him."<sup>2</sup> Yet his return for such niggardly charity is to traduce his benefactor. Quadratus fears that he may even lampoon him in a play, because, as he says, Lampatho "liquors himself in the juice of my bounty; and when he hath suck'd up strength of spirit he squeezeth it in my own face; when I have refined and sharp'd his wits with good food, he cuts my fingers, and breaks jests upon me."<sup>3</sup> In other words, Lampatho's appetite for lampoon is voracious and insatiable.

At his first appearance, then, he appropriately illustrates his habit of insinuating himself into the favor of fools, only for the purpose of using his intimacy to attack the folly he thus discovers. In one speech he begs the clothesmonger Laverdure to visit him at his lodging, and in the next urges Quadratus to "shoot him through and through with a jest; make him lie by the lee, thou basilisco<sup>4</sup> of wit."<sup>5</sup> The invitation prompts Quadratus to berate Lampatho as an "earwig that wriggles into men's brains," as a "dirty cur, that bemirest with thy fawning"—a savage reproof which elicits a furious rejoinder, in the form of a threat:

<sup>1</sup>The phrase is Hillebrand's (*Child Actors*, p. 296).

<sup>2</sup>IV, i, 120-22 (*Works*, II, 393).

<sup>3</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 122-26.

<sup>4</sup>A basilisco, or basilisk, was another name for cockatrice, a fabulous reptile whose breath—even whose look—was supposed to be fatal.

<sup>5</sup>II, i, 100-101 (*Works*, II, 348).

Look for the satire: if all the sour juice  
Of a tart brain can souse thy estimate,  
I'll pickle thee."<sup>7</sup>

Quadratus properly attacks Lampatho's extravagantly bitter words. They are, he knows, the utterance of "a scrubbing railer" and the product of envy and hatred. Such furious malice can stimulate no reasoned correction of general vices and follies. It expresses no sincere moral imperative. It is, in fact, rank detraction.

Moreover, Lampatho presently admits that his fury, expressed in sonorous fustian, is not sincere. He has assumed the violent attitude and employed the vehement language because both are popular in the theatre.

This is the strain that chokes the theatres;  
That makes them crack with full-stuff'd audience;  
This is your humour only in request,  
Forsooth to rail."<sup>8</sup>

So, throughout the play, Quadratus feeds Lampatho's railing humour, goading him to ridiculous exhibitions of his worked-up violence. Like Carlo in *Every Man Out of His Humor*, and other dramatic buffoons, Lampatho implements his ridicule with absurdly strained metaphors. Quadratus is particularly happy if he can stimulate the recipient of his bounty to one of these farfetched verbal flights. When Celia, Meletza, and other ladies appear, he turns to Lampatho, exclaiming:

Uds fut! I can liken them to nothing but great men's great horse  
upon great days, whose tails are truss'd up in silk and silver."<sup>9</sup>

The examples that have been given of Lampatho's quality should suffice to make clear his essential nature. He is of the same lineage as Carlo and Brabant senior—a member of the growing family of dramatic buffoons and railers.

His distinguishing characteristic is feigned melancholy. This is the humour which Quadratus is peculiarly interested in provoking and in forcing into an exaggerated display. He begins:

Mark't, mark't: in Heaven's handiwork there's naught—  
Believe it.

And Lampatho takes up the refrain and automatically develops it:

<sup>7</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 112-14, 122-24 (*Works*, II, 348-49).

<sup>8</sup>III, ii, 165-68 (*Works*, II, 376).

<sup>9</sup>IV, i, 136-38 (*Works*, II, 393).

In Heaven's handiwork there's naught,  
None more vile, accursed, reprobate to bliss,  
Than man; and 'mong men a scholar most.<sup>100</sup>

Thus he betters his instruction, by carrying the expression of his pessimism and misanthropy to absurd lengths. Affecting scholarship, he invades that field with his nihilism and his savage and farfetched metaphors. He conceives delight, or intellectual satisfaction, to be a spaniel sleeping at his master's feet, while he himself searches in vain through all the tomes of the sages for truth:

And still I held converse with Zabarell,<sup>101</sup>  
Aquinas, Scotus, and the musty saw  
Of antic Donate; still my spaniel slept [etc.].<sup>102</sup>

Such bootless, unrewarding study has reduced him to a state of complete philosophical nihilism:

"I know I know naught but I naught do know."<sup>103</sup>

The futility of research has driven him to black melancholy, and that in turn has expressed itself in insolent detraction. (Most of his emotional energy is devoted to boasting of the freedom and scope that he intends to exhibit in his correction of vice. But more than once he embarks on a course of railing, with the sails of abuse full-spread. Then his high-stomached verbiage is a parody, partly of the threats of punishment to evildoers uttered by Asper, but partly, too, of the violence shown by the formal satirists, including Marston himself.) The following passage is typical:

Let me unbrace my breasts, strip up my sleeves,  
Stand like an executioner to vice,  
To strike his head off with the keener edge  
Of my sharp spirit.

Now is my fury mounted. Fix your eyes;  
Intend your senses; bend your list'ning up;  
For I'll make greatness quake; I'll taw the hide  
Of thick-skinn'd Hugeness.<sup>104</sup>

Lampatho, then, differs in three respects from the typical buffoon:

<sup>100</sup>II, ii, 126-30 (*Works*, II, 362).

<sup>101</sup>"Giacomo Zabarella (1533-1589), the Aristotelian commentator, professor of logic and philosophy at Padua." (Bullen's note, in *Works of John Marston*, II, 363.)

<sup>102</sup>II, ii, 165-67 (*Works*, II, 363).

<sup>103</sup>*Ibid.*, I. 193 (*Works*, II, 364).

<sup>104</sup>III, ii, 153-56, 158-61 (*Works*, II, 376).

he is a weary, disillusioned scholar; he has been driven to intellectual nihilism by the failure of his researches; and he boasts of the freedom and violence which he is going to exhibit in his correction of vice and folly. Instead of actually satirizing the fools and knaves, he continually threatens to expose and purge them. Lampatho's extravagances are all the result of envy and self-love. His railing plumes up his will. Indubitably, some of these peculiarities point directly at Jonson the satirist—particularly at his manner of performing his office in *Every Man Out of His Humor*. Asper, with his boasts of "an armed, and resolved hand" and "a whip of steele,"<sup>106</sup> is parodied in Lampatho's terrific threats to "rip up and lance our time's impieties."<sup>106</sup> Macilente, like Lampatho, proudly admits that envy is the emotion that sharpens his critical vision, and his pen too. Finally, Jonson like Lampatho was an impecunious scholar.<sup>107</sup> But the latter's conviction of the emptiness and worthlessness of study was, as far as we know, not shared by Jonson at any stage of his career. Striking as are these correspondences, they must not beguile the reader into a literal-minded assumption that Lampatho is Jonson—much less that the actor who first played the part was made up to resemble Jonson, as Morse Allen suggests.<sup>108</sup> Indeed, (sometimes Marston seems to be deriding, more clearly than anything else, his own violence as expressed in his youthful satires.<sup>109</sup>) He, like Lampatho, had melancholy enthrone herself in his blood. And Marston's profound mind led him, like Lampatho, to execrate the universal frame of things. Yet even in this figure Marston did not permit personal lampoon to engulf the general aspects of his satire. The critics who have reduced *What You Will* to a mere document in an altercation between the two dramatists apparently forget that it was designed as theatrical entertainment. The audience, even though somewhat familiar with

<sup>106</sup>Sig. B.

<sup>106</sup>III, ii, 149 (*Works*, II, 376).

<sup>107</sup>Small (*Stage-Quarrel*, pp. 110-12) points out these correspondences.

<sup>108</sup>*Satire of John Marston*, p. 49.

<sup>109</sup>This phase of Lampatho's character has led a number of critics to make the curious mistake of identifying him with Marston (cf. Penniman, *War of the Theatres*, p. 138), and Mina Kerr (*Influence of Ben Jonson on English Comedy, 1598-1642* [New York, 1912], p. 28) says: "Lampatho . . . is identified by Marston with himself, in the way that Jonson so often uses one of his dramatic personages as a mouthpiece for his own utterances." As Small (*op. cit.*, p. 110) points out, that would be very strange, since Lampatho is one of the most thoroughly and systematically derided characters in the entire play.

the details of the quarrel, would have become quickly bored with Lampatho, unless he had represented to them more than a hostile portrait of the man Ben Jonson. Lampatho may often have suggested Jonson to those who knew of the feud, but, like Carlo and Brabant senior, Lampatho represented the spurious satirist, unworthily motivated and employing false and ineffective methods of attacking and exposing vice and folly. Through his ridicule of Lampatho, Marston seems to repudiate the "malcontent" critic and all his ways.

The purge which Quadratus administers to Lampatho, near the end of the play, reflects another interesting idea which Marston appears now to have adopted. He plans to destroy his creature's melancholy at its source. Hence, through the aid of wine and the eloquently advertised charms of the ladies, he persuades Lampatho to abandon the habits and paraphernalia of fusty, musty scholarship.

Lamp-oil, watch-candles, rug-gowns, and small juice,  
Thin commons, four o'clock rising,—I renounce you all.

Then he decides that he will change the fellow into a gallant—

"Unto the habit, fashion of the age."<sup>110</sup>

He tells Lampatho that his first step in the transformation is to secure a lady to love, and instructs him that he must gain Meletza's interest by addressing her carelessly in terms of affected scorn. His initial efforts are abortive, his phrases being but a strained expression of inkhorn affectation. Meletza asks, "How will you value my love?", and Lampatho replies:

Why, just as you respect me—as nothing; for out of nothing, nothing is bred: so nothing shall not beget anything, anything bring nothing, nothing bring anything, anything and nothing shall be What You Will.<sup>111</sup>

Meletza leads him on to more practical demonstration of his passion, by giving him a favor to wear and insinuating that "slow speech swift love doth often shroud." But, instead of responding with the embraces that Meletza expects, Lampatho breaks out into what the author wishes us to regard as the pedantry of love. He mounts the language of dotage for a flight into the intense inane:

My soul's entranced; your favour doth transport  
My sense past sense, by your adored graces;  
I doat, am rapt.<sup>112</sup>

<sup>110</sup>IV, i, 179-80, 187 (*Works*, II, 395).

<sup>111</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 246-51 (*Works*, II, 398).

<sup>112</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 260-63.



Meletza greets such bombast with scorn and bids him "Go, pack!" Then Quadratus emphasizes and points the fool's discomfiture by such lines as

"*My soul's entranced! Fut, couldst not clip and kiss?*"<sup>113</sup>

Small<sup>114</sup> believes that, in this incident, "Marston, imitating Jonson's method in *Every Man out of his Humour*, causes the conversion of Lampatho." But the question is, conversion to what? All that Quadratus succeeds in doing is to drive Lampatho out of his humorous melancholy into another expression of his essential folly, fully as absurd and as clearly ridiculed. The incident seems intended, rather, to serve as an adverse criticism of Jonson's method of purgation. Marston's comment is that mere derision, particularly when taking the form of a mechanical booby trap, can never bring a gull to sanity. The most that it can do is to change the form and the direction of his folly.

Quadratus, sharply contrasted with Lampatho, represents, as did Planet in *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, the proper critical attitude for the satirist. His name suggests that he is foursquare and therefore properly based for both judgment and action. Yet he appears to be no stoic at all, but a witty hedonist, who believes in enjoying the pleasures of life. He first appears in the familiar role of wit-intriguer, feeding the humours of the gulls in original ways, in order that they can be forced into full display. He turns his attention, in the beginning, to Jacomo, the melancholy, mad lover, who enters "unbraced, and careless dressed," "a map of boundless woe." He speaks like a player, in language "high poetical."

. . . . All things start up with light,  
Only my heart, that endless night and day,  
Lies bed-rid, crippled by coy Celia.<sup>115</sup>

So he cries for "piety and pity" only because the two words alliterate. Quadratus' method of curing the amorous dotage of the fellow is to urge him to tone up his emotional life by hating everything:

Love! Hang love.  
It is the abject outcast of the world.  
Hate all things; hate the world, thyself, all men;  
Hate knowledge; strive not be over-wise:

<sup>113</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 265, 270.

<sup>114</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 112.

<sup>115</sup>I, i, 27-29 (*Works*, II, 332).

It drew destruction into Paradise.

· · · · ·  
All things are error, dirt and nothing,  
Or pant with want, or gorged to loathing.<sup>116</sup>

This is an ironically conceived diatribe, composed for the purpose of purging Jacomo of his humour, and should not be regarded as a revelation of Marston's mind—"the philosophic Weltschmerz of a bankrupt idealist."<sup>117</sup> Since Quadratus does not express the same mood again in the play, it must here be regarded as assumed with a view to expediting his functions as an agent of correction of the gulls. To be sure, his burst of pessimistic eloquence has no immediate effect on the melancholy lover. But when, a moment later, Celia greets with contempt the song which Jacomo has his boy sing under her window, he remembers Quadratus' lesson, and decides to pursue the lady with detestation. He forthwith begins to act his hatred by joining Celia's brothers in their plot to thwart her plans to remarry. Thus, Jacomo has been driven out of his humour not by any plot but by sheer eloquence.

For the benefit of Laverdure, the fashion hound, and Simplicius Faber, who admires excessively the counterfeit Lampatho, he assumes another attitude. He delivers a long speech in ironic praise of "fantasticness"—the taste that drives Laverdure to seek singularity and novelty in dress. This "fantasticness," he says—

*Phantasia incomplexa*—is a function  
Even of the bright immortal part of man.  
It is the common pass, the sacred door,  
Unto the privy chamber of the soul.<sup>118</sup>

Lest anyone should mistake these lines for a reasoned defense of every manifestation of the most precious of a man's qualities—his individuality—Quadratus soon becomes so extravagant that his derisive purpose is unmistakable:

And I were to be hanged I would be choked  
Fantastically. He can scarce be saved  
That's not fantastical: I stand firm to it.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>116</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 59-63, 72-73 (*Works*, II, 334).

<sup>117</sup>This phrase appears in J. L. Davis, "The Sons of Ben, 1625-1642" (an unpublished doctoral dissertation [1934] in the Library of the University of Michigan), I, 217.

<sup>118</sup>II, i, 191-94 (*Works*, II, 352).

<sup>119</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 209-11 (*Works*, II, 352-53).

Such ironic praise of folly is in itself an effective method of satire, and was a successful way of stimulating the two fools, who took Quadratus seriously. Laverdure, released by Quadratus from the restrictions of Lampatho's censure, asks scornfully:

Shall I forbear to caper, sing, or vault?  
To wear fresh clothes, or wear perfumèd sweets?  
To trick my face, or glory in my fate?  
T'abandon natural propensitudes?<sup>120</sup>

And Simplicius interrupts the mock encomium of fantasticalness and the "venting" of good wits, to declare, "I'll be something; I have a conceal'd humour in me; and 'twere broach'd 'twould spurt i' faith."<sup>121</sup> Quadratus proves that he is taking the surest and quickest way for broaching these humours. That is the main dramatic business of the type figure, in satiric comedy, that he represents. Since his methods keep the business of this new form of drama vigorously in motion, he has a right to be contemptuous of the heavy-footed satiric methods adopted by the commentators of whom Lampatho is a kind of parody, and is justified in dismissing such awkwardness with a final derisive shout,

"A fico for the mew and envious pish."<sup>122</sup>

The great virtue of Quadratus' method of dealing with folly is that it does not demand that the critic isolate himself from the innocent delights of social life. Solitude deliberately sought for purposes of criticism produces acerbity in thought and ineffective snarling in expression.

Quadratus manages to be accounted a man of the world. Celia describes him as "the absolute courtier," who, says Meletza, "flatters admirable, kisses 'fair madam,'" and "smells surpassing sweet." He is fond of drink. "Sleek-bellied Bacchus" satisfies best his "predominate humour." He goes to the feast at Albano's house in a spirit of gay abandon and encounters Simplicius, who is dreaming aloud of the rich taffeta cloak, white satin suit, and chain of pearl that he desires of God. This manifestation of folly Quadratus attacks with playful severity, but he apparently has no desire to reform the gull. He dismisses him with, "A fool I found thee and a fool I leave thee." But a moment later the roguish servants deceive Simplicius by pass-

<sup>120</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 158-61 (*Works*, II, 351).

<sup>121</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 251-52 (*Works*, II, 354).

<sup>122</sup>V, i, 373 (*Works*, II, 419).

ing off his own page, Pippo, as Mistress Perpetuana, and another page as the lady's fool. When Quadratus realizes that all possible merri-ment has been extracted from this smith of simplicity, he sends him away with a curt, "Fool! Get thee hence."

As much of the character of Quadratus as has been considered in the foregoing analysis should create no puzzle. He represents what Marston seems to feel is the critical attitude best adapted to the purposes of satiric comedy. The comments of a stern *raisonneur*, like Asper, who is aloof from the action, are undramatic. Vituperation and moral fulmination halt the action and retard the display of the "humour" figures. To facilitate that exhibition, the commentator had to become a wit-intriguer, and the functions of such a character were inconsistent with the nature of a moral censor—like Macilente, for example. Quadratus, on the contrary, with his libertine freedom, could adroitly do his duty as exhibitor of folly, without stepping out of character for a moment.

However, Quadratus exhibits other characteristics, that have rendered him a riddle to many critics. They complicate their efforts to understand, by assuming that he represents Marston—at least, that he gives direct expression to Marston's social and ethical points of view. But, when they try to make of all his utterances a kind of harmony of Marston's gospel, they are obliged to resort to far-fetched subtlety in order to account for obvious contradictions. They admit that Quadratus, while he may be representing Marston's opinion, is not illustrating his practice. Morse Allen offers a typically intricate and confused explanation of the Marston-Quadratus relationship. He writes: "Simultaneously Quadratus is cynic, stoic and epicurean. . . . He [Marston] was not putting himself on the stage in Quadratus, but I believe he was representing his feelings toward life, as they were at that stage of his development. It was a phase full of odd mixtures, of beginnings and endings, and was bound to be a passing one."<sup>128</sup> According to these interpretations, Quadratus was a bewildered and bewildering character, because he was the mirror of his emotionally and intellectually distraught creator.

The theory, already adumbrated in the present chapter, that Quadratus was a libertine and hedonist and that his distinguishing satiric method was ironic praise, has the merit of resolving these

<sup>128</sup>*Op. cit.*, pp. 46-47, *passim*.

difficulties.<sup>124</sup> Marston did not need to invent this pose. It had been developed, in all its features, by a satirist and satiric dramatist to whom Quadratus declared allegiance earlier in the play—Pietro Aretino.<sup>125</sup> Lampatho had objected to Quadratus' point of view, exclaiming,

"O, sir, you are so square, you scorn reproof."

And Quadratus answered:

No, sir; should discreet Mastigophoros,  
Or the dear spirit acute Canaidus  
(That Aretine, that most of me beloved,  
Who in the rich esteem I prize his soul,  
I term myself); should these once menace me,  
Or curb my humours with well-govern'd check,  
I should with most industrious regard,  
Observe, abstain, and curb my skipping lightness.<sup>126</sup>

The speech, as Small has pointed out,<sup>127</sup> is a parody of one of Criticus' [Crites'] speeches in *Cynthias Revels*:

. . . . . If good *Chrestus*,  
*Euthus*, or *Phronimus*, had spoake the words,  
They would have moov'd me; & I should have cal'd  
My thoughts and Actions to a strict accompt  
Upon the hearing: . . .<sup>128</sup>

Chrestus, Euthus, and Phronimus are names invented to indicate men dominated, respectively, by the virtues of honesty, frankness, and prudence. Quadratus nominates men of a different sort as arbiters of the satiric excellence of his work. The name Mastigophoros (*Μαστιγο-Φορος*) was probably chosen partly because its resounding syllables make it even more impressive than any one of the Latinate words in Jonson's passage. It means "whip bearer" and sometimes has the derived signification of constable or policeman. According

<sup>124</sup>Quadratus' presentation before the Duke of "the honour'd end of Cato Utican" (V, i, 237) is ironic. It is a parody of almost all the ideas, justifying suicide, which were put into the mouth of Cato during the Renaissance—particularly the notion that, by escaping the tyrannies of the body, death enlarges the individual's life. (Cf. Theodore Spencer, *Death and Elizabethan Tragedy* [Cambridge, Mass., 1936], pp. 170-79.)

<sup>125</sup>Aretino and his works were well known in England, particularly during the last two decades of the sixteenth century. I have collected much evidence (which I hope to publish in the near future) to show the extent and the character of his English reputation.

<sup>126</sup>II, i, 169-76 (*Works*, II, 351).

<sup>127</sup>*Stage-Quarrel*, p. 106.

<sup>128</sup>III, iii, sig. Fv.

to Thomas Thomas, a character in one of the works of Budaeus was given this name. He was "a certaine minister, who with whippes remooved the people where there was much prease."<sup>129</sup> Later in the seventeenth century the word came to mean the functionary who performed that sort of service. Edward Philips has the following note on the word: "*Mastigophore*, (*Greek*) an Usher that with stripes makes way in a croud."<sup>130</sup> Canaidus is a very puzzling word. It clearly denotes libertine or debaucher of some sort and is probably a misprint for *cinaedus* (κιναιδός), meaning sodomite.<sup>131</sup>

To Quadratus, the ideal satirist or "whip bearer" is a keen-minded debauchee—one of the gay, ribald fellows of whom Pietro Aretino was the prototype and patron. Such a person Quadratus himself attempted to be. His satiric spirit is clearly an imitation of that displayed by Aretino in his most characteristic works, notably his *Ragionamenti* and, among his comedies, *La Cortigiana*. Here, apparently, is the first discernible influence of Aretino upon English drama—an influence that in the succeeding few years was destined to become formative.

Quadratus, for these reasons, is the most important character in *What You Will*. Being custodian of the satiric elements in the play, he successfully extricates them from the farcical romance. Few are the scenes into which derision of some sort has not made its way. But the spirit which animates the ridicule is neither severe nor strident; consequently, the mirth of comedy and the impulse toward deflation of the fools harmonize, as they fail to do in all of Jonson's comical satires.

The play is slight. No element in the plot is developed with the skill of an experienced dramatist. Marston's conceptions of folly and stupidity are derived and his social criticism is shallow. However, the drama acquires some historical importance because of the author's partially successful effort to domicile in English comical satire a spirit like that of Aretino, who years previously, in his four comedies, had first effected a successful union of the apparently incompatible genres of satire and comedy.

<sup>129</sup>*Thomae Thomae Dictionarium summa fide ac diligentia accuratissime emendatum*, . . . *Quinta editio* . . . *auctior* (Cantabrigiae, ex officina J. Legati, 1596), sig. Mm4.

<sup>130</sup>Edward Philips, *The New World of Words* (3d ed.; London, 1671), sig. Ff4v.

<sup>131</sup>This reading was suggested to me by my friend, Professor R. W. Chambers.

V. *Summary*

The foregoing brief review of Marston's early plays shows clearly that his attempts to express the essential features of formal satire in terms of the stage were, like Jonson's, frankly experimental. Marston, being unpracticed and inexperienced in the new field, built his first dramas upon the crude sorts of plots that were currently popular. He had none of the self-assurance which emboldened Jonson to devise, as he did in *Every Man Out of His Humor*, a new kind of comic structure. Superficially, these plays of Marston are farce or melodrama, or a slipshod combination of the two. Moreover, he selected as objects of his derision only a few of the most conventional of the fools and knaves who crowd the pages of Jonson and of his own poetical satires. He did not bother to scrutinize afresh the social and economic conditions of the world in which he lived. Another problem held his attention.

Marston concentrated his thought upon the nature and the duties of the critics and commentators among his dramatis personae. Jonson found his answers to problems affecting these characters, in classical tradition and in the nature of his own sturdy personality. His ingenuity was turned to the discovery of theatrically practical devices for relieving the bareness of the logically impeccable structure of *Every Man Out of His Humor*. But Marston seemed to realize that the severe and superior moral attitude traditional to satire—the one adopted by Jonson and even by his own first commentator, Feliche—tended to suppress comic mirth. He sought to find a substitute, for the representatives of this stern restriction, who would not banish expansive laughter but positively enhance it. He therefore devised variations on Jonson's dramatic theme of two contrasted critics like Carlo and Macilente. Hence the most interesting characters in *Jack Drum's Entertainment* and *What You Will* are the pair of opposed commentators. They hold our attention, not so much because Marston occasionally uses them as mouthpieces for himself or for Jonson's haughty, unplacable spirit, as because they impersonate various satiric points of view. Of all these figures Quadratus is the most interesting, in that he represents a satiric impulse which is able to consummate a union with the traditional gaiety of comedy. In his background are the libertine spirit which

presided successfully over the comedies of Pietro Aretino and the similar spirit that was to animate the really great satiric comedies of the early years of the reign of King James I.

After the completion of *What You Will* Marston wrote no more plays before the closing of the theatres on May 26, 1603. But in 1604 or early in 1605 he composed *The Malcontent* and *The Dutch Courtezan*, both probably prepared for the newly formed syndicate of the Queen's Revels.<sup>122</sup> These plays were the product of a more competent dramatic satirist, but they could have exerted no more influence on *Troilus and Cressida* than Jonson's masterful *Volpone*. We must now seek to illuminate this puzzling play of Shakespeare's in the light of our studies of the early comical satires of Marston and Jonson.<sup>123</sup>

The experiments of these two dramatists had established a number of new conventions. They had devised an improved stage for the exhibition and deflation of most of the gulls and knaves who had appeared in the banished satires. They had welcomed, in particular, the old crowd of social pretenders and gulls and had retained the same severity toward sins of sex. They had devised effective ways of exhibiting and deflating the fools. They had presented the exposure of the gulls as resulting either in public renunciation of their aberrations after they had been made forcibly aware of them (in other words, they were driven out of their humours), or in their scornful dismissal following their humiliation—as it were, their ejection from the play.

The satire directed against such characters was only now and then manifestly ethical. More often it appears to have been purely social.

<sup>122</sup>Cf. E. K. Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, III, 432; also H. R. Walley, "The Dates of *Hamlet* and Marston's *The Malcontent*," *Review of English Studies*, IX, 397-409.

<sup>123</sup>It will be remarked that no analysis of *Histriomastix* has been included in this chapter. Marston's contribution to the revision of that play, in 1599, was considerable. His most important change occurs in the character of Chrisogonus, who, in the older portions of the play, was a stoical lecturer—an astronomer. Chambers (IV, 18) says that "he seems to belong to the order of ideas connected with the scientific school of Thomas Harriott." In Marston's additions he becomes a translating scholar, a satirist, and a dramatist. These vocations may have been suggested by those of Ben Jonson and, if so, they were intended almost surely to be complimentary. The burlesque play on *Troilus and Cressida*, in spite of Small's categorical statement (*op. cit.*, pp. 68-69), does not certainly belong to the revision and there is nothing in it to point to Shakespeare's play. Thus only a little in Marston's revision has any satiric importance, and none of that little makes any contribution to the development of satiric comedy regarded as a dramatic type.



But the distinction between the two modes, in Elizabethan times, was of little importance. (The most egregious of social absurdities were universally regarded as secondary revelations of some inequity.) Personal lampoon was frequently insinuated into general attacks on vice and imbecility. It was clearly in harmony with the plays' pervasive spirit of mockery. This or that derided figure might display intellectual characteristics, or even personal idiosyncrasies, of people well known to part of the audiences. But these recognizably intimate features were intended to give richness and vitality to the characterization, and immediacy to the ridicule. Seldom, if ever, is it permissible to take any one of the *dramatis personae* in these satiric comedies as a detailed portrait of an individual and as having no life independent of the human being whose distorted shadow he is.

(Finally, the indispensable convention of the new genre was the presence of two commentators: one buffoonish or otherwise absurdly inept and wrongheaded; the other—philosophically sound, his blood under the control of his brain—introduced to enunciate the author's opinions. These figures draw "characters" of the fools; comment on their conduct; devise plots to compass their humiliation, exposure, and occasional reform; and pronounce final judgments on their actions. Plays devoted to such purposes and employing such methods were not intended to arouse mere thoughtless gaiety or to send theatregoers home in a state of exuberance. But this fact does not necessarily mean that the authors of the works were filled with disillusionment and misanthropy when they composed them. They were indubitably in an analytical and critical state of mind, and they employed the conventional literary form best adapted to rendering their mood entertaining. Whatever effects their dramas had upon Elizabethan spectators, their object was not to produce disgust with life and disdain for mankind. They sought only to arouse thoughtful laughter which would sharpen the social sense of their audience and clarify its moral judgments.

## CHAPTER VII

### *Troilus and Cressida*

Shakespeare composed *Troilus and Cressida* during the years when the vogue of comical satire was at its height. In constructing the play according to the fully developed principles of the new form, he but furnished another instance of his habit of following the dramatic fashion. His first care was to devote the drama to attacks upon social follies and ethical lapses and to saturate it with a spirit of derision. Then he set himself the task of employing and enriching the conventions which Jonson and Marston had established in their efforts to make their satiric plays effective dramatic equivalents of the forbidden satires. These conventions had more or less fixed the nature of the follies and vices to be satirized, and settled the approved methods of construction.

This was by no means the first play which Shakespeare filled with derision of folly. *Love's Labour's Lost* was devoted to systematic jibing at the absurd plan of a group of gentlemen who believed that only by absenting themselves for years from all social intercourse with women could they become successful philosophers. Shakespeare's satiric intention is clear, whether or not he meant the King of Navarre and his fellow academicians to serve as a picture of the coterie of scientists and poets who surrounded Sir Walter Raleigh.<sup>1</sup> In *As You Like It* Shakespeare, through the character of Jaques, mocked at the malcontent spirit of the English satirists of the 1590's. In the same play he also expressed good-natured ridicule of many social follies.<sup>2</sup> In *Twelfth Night* he fashioned Malvolio and Sir Andrew Aguecheek on the model of figures which Ben Jonson had derided in *Every Man in His Humor*.<sup>3</sup> But such satire as appeared in these plays never overwhelmed the traditional methods and tone of comedy. In *Troilus and Cressida*, however, the satire is of an altogether different sort. It can best be explained as the animating spirit

<sup>1</sup>This is the theory cleverly argued by Miss Frances A. Yates, in her *A Study of Love's Labour's Lost* (Cambridge, 1936).

<sup>2</sup>Cf. O. J. Campbell, "Jaques," *Huntington Library Bulletin*, No. 8, pp. 71-102.

<sup>3</sup>Cf. Paul Mueschke and Jeannette Fleisher, "Jonsonian Elements in the Comic Underplot of *Twelfth Night*," *PMLA*, XLVIII, 722-40.

of the newly developed literary form—of a play designed to take a place in the self-conscious dramatic movement initiated by Ben Jonson.

Many modern critics are contemptuous of the notion that the play is actually a dramatic satire. K. Deighton is certain that Shakespeare can never have abandoned his mind to that kind of writing. "Shakespeare," he explains, "is incidentally a satirist, but he does not propose to himself to write a satire. Such a proceeding is alien from his nature, alien from his conception of the dramatic scope, alien from his practice." The author's complete assurance of the soundness of these conclusions is founded on nothing more secure than his subjective prejudices. Professor W. W. Lawrence expresses a similar doubt, in much more judicial fashion. He writes, "We cannot prove that satire does not exist in *Troilus and Cressida*, but we must be extremely cautious about assuming that it is present, and still more that it controls the spirit of the play."

Baskervill, on the contrary, is confident that the spirit of the play is precisely that of satire—indeed, that it is a reflection of "the bitterer satiric spirit of Marston, who developed the malcontent." And Professor F. S. Boas explains the puzzling nature of *Troilus and Cressida* by asserting that it is "a merciless satire of the high-flown ideal of love, fostered by the mediaeval cycle of romance" and by "savage scorn" for "the feudal code of love and honour."

These last two critics properly place their emphasis upon the satiric temper with which Shakespeare approached the materials out of which he made his drama. But neither pays the least attention to the very important question of its dramatic form. Nor does any other critic more than advert to that question. In view of the many efforts to make this sphinx yield its meaning, the neglect is surprising. Professor Lawrence's book does contain an oblique reference<sup>1</sup> to the dramatic form of the work, when he describes it as "an experiment in the middle ground between comedy and tragedy in which experience often places us." It is precisely such middle ground that satiric plays were thought to occupy, according to the critical theory

<sup>1</sup>*Troilus and Cressida*, ed. K. Deighton (1906; in "The Arden Shakespeare"), p. xxv.

<sup>2</sup>W. W. Lawrence, *Shakespeare's Problem Comedies* (New York, 1931), p. 172.

<sup>3</sup>Baskervill, *op. cit.*, p. 154, n. 1.

<sup>4</sup>Frederick S. Boas, *Shakspeare and His Predecessors* (London, 1902), pp. 373, 384.

<sup>5</sup>P. 169.

of the Renaissance. Hence a paraphrase of Professor Lawrence's opinion may serve as the thesis to be developed in the present chapter: "Shakespeare's picture of the Troy story is an experiment in the middle ground between comedy and tragedy, which Ben Jonson had claimed as the proper field for his new comical satire." This view of *Troilus and Cressida*, it is hoped, will explain away some of the difficulties which have caused many commentators to regard the drama as "the chief problem in Shakespeare."

### I. *The Quandary of the Critics*

The editors of the first folio were as much baffled in their effort to classify *Troilus and Cressida* as their successors have been. Knight was the first to analyze the evidences of their embarrassment. He points out that on the title-page of the first quarto edition the play is described as "a 'Famous Historie,'" but that in the preface of the same edition it is more than once referred to as a comedy. In the folio edition, however, it is given the title "The Tragedie of Troylus and Cressida," and the editors first planned to place it immediately after *Romeo and Juliet*. But upon reflection they apparently realized that it did not have the conventional form of comedy, tragedy, or history. "They therefore," says Knight, "placed it between the Histories and the Tragedies, leaving to the reader to make his own classification."<sup>10</sup> Does not this confusion of the editors arise from the fact that Shakespeare did not design the play as any one of these conventional dramatic forms, but as something different from all three of them—as a comical satire?

The quandary of the first editors has reappeared in the mind of every critic of *Troilus and Cressida*. Professor Tatlock, writing in 1916, calls it "the most puzzling of all Shakespeare's plays"; and then remarks that "critic after critic has recognized this fact, and offered explanations more or less . . . destructive of each other."<sup>11</sup> They have been bothered, perhaps most of all, by the harsh, bitter spirit which the gentle Shakespeare exhibits. They commonly explain this pessi-

<sup>10</sup>As J. S. P. Tatlock has pointed out ("The Siege of Troy in Elizabethan Literature, Especially in Shakespeare and Heywood," *PMLA*, XXX, 760). Rapp and Morton Luce have both thus characterized the play. Tatlock himself uses the phrase as the title of an interesting essay in *The Sewanee Review* (XXIV, 129-47).

<sup>11</sup>*The Pictorial Edition of the Works of Shakspeare*, ed. Charles Knight (1839), VII, 72.

<sup>12</sup>*Sewanee Review*, XXIV, 129.

mistic tone as an expression of the author's deep disillusionment with life. That, in its turn, is supposed to have resulted from profoundly unhappy personal experience. Since disgust with love and women seems to be the most powerful of the feelings which the play betrays, some "dark lady" must have treated the poet basely. Such is the view that has been accepted by many of the most famous commentators, from Furnivall to Bradley,<sup>12</sup> and it reached its most exact form in the literal biographical assumptions of Brandes and Frank Harris. This sort of subjective interpretation of the play, for a while outmoded by the substitution of historical perspective, has of late again become the vogue. Sir Edmund Chambers, for example, writes that "in *Troilus and Cressida* a disillusioned Shakespeare turns back upon his own former ideals and the world's ancient ideals of heroism and romance, and questions them."<sup>13</sup> Professor Tucker Brooke, in a very interesting essay entitled "Shakespeare's Study in Culture and Anarchy,"<sup>14</sup> says that *Troilus and Cressida* "is fundamentally the play of Chaucer's defeated lovers, . . . 'whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows' could not be romantically glorified as a moral victory, and perhaps for just that reason made special appeal to a dramatist who, by the period of 'Hamlet' and 'Troilus and Cressida,' had lost his joy in successful people."

Other critics believe that Shakespeare's baffling tone can be easily understood if his treatment of the story be placed in its proper historical perspective. They show that, before he decided to use it as material for his play, most of its elements had become securely fixed by tradition. Hence he would not have dared to change it radically, any more than, in composing his chronicle plays, he would have ventured to distort the facts of English history.<sup>15</sup> The attitude of the English public toward the Homeric characters had been established once for all by Caxton's *Recuyell* (ca. 1475), which was representative of late medieval versions of the story. The atmosphere created, in these works and in Caxton, as proper for the Homeric characters

<sup>12</sup>For an enumeration of the principal critics who postulated a disillusioned man behind this play, see *ibid.*, p. 132, n. 1.

<sup>13</sup>E. K. Chambers, *Shakespeare: A Survey* (London, 1925), p. 193 (quoted George C. Taylor, "Shakespeare's Attitude towards Love and Honor in *Troilus and Cressida*," *PMLA*, XLV, 781-82).

<sup>14</sup>*The Yale Review*, XVII, 573.

<sup>15</sup>*Troilus and Cressida*, ed. J. S. P. Tatlock ("Tudor Shakespeare"), p. xx (quoted Taylor, *op. cit.*, p. 781).

was, to paraphrase Tatlock, "amorous, degenerately chivalric, and devoid of a sense of heroic dignity."<sup>16</sup> That is, "Shakespeare was fully under the influence of mediaeval rather than classical conceptions of the tale of Troy."<sup>17</sup> Such debased versions of an entirely heroic tale consciously belittle all the Greeks. Some characters—Ajax and Thersites in particular—had already been degraded in classical sources. The process was carried much further by Elizabethan writers, because, as Lawrence says, they "loved to jibe at the braggart and the railer."<sup>18</sup> These versions thus debased the Greeks because most of the nations of western Europe believed that they were direct descendants of the Trojans. But Caxton in his *Recuyell* presents even the Trojans in a highly unfavorable light. They are, as Tucker Brooke says, downright dastardly like Paris, dishonest like Priam, or at the best, like Hector, too unrealistic to be able to follow the dictates of either conscience or judgment."

Toward the love story also, these critics assert, Shakespeare took the only attitude that his audience would understand or relish. By 1602 Cressida's good name was gone forever. It had become a byword for harlot. Her love could not have been presented otherwise than as sensual and base. Hence, not Shakespeare's pessimism, but the state of various literary traditions embodied in the play, is made to account for the bitter, disillusioned spirit that seems to preside over all the action.

Another reason for the unpleasant effect which the play produces, say these critics, is a lack of internal harmony. It is composed of too many incongruous elements. "We have," writes Tatlock, "chivalrous gallantry, stupid and cowardly savagery, stately dignity, voluptuousness without charm, weighty wisdom, low scurrility."<sup>19</sup> Though this critic does not make the observation, the modern reader's sense of confusion arises not so much from the presence of multifarious material as from the failure to discover any principle unifying it. The feeling is confirmed by the strange inconclusive ending. Most critics have assumed that no dramatist as skillful as Shakespeare

<sup>16</sup>Tatlock's phrase is "amorous, loosely chivalric, with no consciousness of any lofty heroic dignity to be lived up to." (*PMLA*, XXX, 760.)

<sup>17</sup>Lawrence, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

<sup>18</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 158.

<sup>19</sup>*Yale Review*, XVII, 574-75.

<sup>20</sup>*Sewanee Review*, XXIV, 141.

would have left the main threads of his plot untied at the end of the play. Hence two explanations of that dramatic infelicity have been made. First, there are those who suggest that Shakespeare did not finish the play himself, but gave over the composition of at least the last seven scenes to an inferior assistant.<sup>21</sup> The elder critics persisted in inventing a nameless scapegoat to whom to assign portions of *Troilus and Cressida* which they believed below the great poet's best performance. In the second place, there are those who assume that an earlier play underlies Shakespeare's work, and that toward the end of his revision he appropriated without change whole scenes of his source.

Both of these hypotheses fall short of being satisfactory. The striking and confusing characteristic of this ending is its originality, which neither the author of a conventional "Troy drama" nor a prentice assistant would be capable of risking. Tucker Brooke<sup>22</sup> is surely right in asserting that the last scenes of Act V "like all the rest of the piece are in the poet's genuine style." But it is more difficult to believe, as he does, that the so-called "perfunctoriness" of the close of the play is due to Shakespeare's realization, before he had completed the drama, that it was not suitable for the stage and that consequently there was no use in taking pains to make the ending histrionically effective. (The opinion of Professor Lawrence<sup>23</sup> is more tenable. He holds that the inconclusive outcome of the action was a part of Shakespeare's original design. He could hardly have intended to terminate the play with the punishment of Cressida, as Professor Rollins believes any writer treating her story in the year 1602 would have felt obliged to do.<sup>24</sup> Such a catastrophe would have been entirely out of harmony with the temper of the rest of the work. Any sort of tragic conclusion would have been completely inappropriate. The logical result of such a love as had enslaved Troilus in Shakespeare's play was confusion and futility. Similarly, the forces of folly and egotism in both armies were presented as powerful enough to submerge the wisdom of Ulysses and Hector. Professor Lawrence suggests these points, but makes no effort to

<sup>21</sup>Small (*Stage-Quarrel*, p. 149) takes this view.

<sup>22</sup>*Yale Review*, XVII, 577.

<sup>23</sup>*Op. cit.*, pp. 158 ff.

<sup>24</sup>Hyder E. Rollins, "The Troilus-Cressida Story from Chaucer to Shakespeare," *PMLA*, XXXII, 428.

show that the unusual denouement was aesthetically suitable for the type of comedy Shakespeare was apparently writing. But this peculiarity of *Troilus and Cressida* proves, like many of its other unfamiliar features, to be his version of a dramatic characteristic established by his predecessors as essential to the nature of comical satire.

## II. *The Choice of the Story*

If we assume that Shakespeare decided in the year 1601 to try his hand at a type of play which Jonson and Marston were then writing, we may speculate as to his reasons for so doing and for choosing the tale of Troy for his vehicle. The work was almost surely written for a special audience. The long philosophical and meditative speeches are not the sort to hold the attention of an Elizabethan popular audience. They do not bear as close a relationship to the emotions aroused by the action as do the soliloquies in the great tragedies. Besides, the characters who utter these tirades are not taking counsel with their most deeply-felt convictions. They are, rather, arguing about intellectual issues which would have interested only a gathering of persons endowed with well trained and subtle minds. Peter Alexander<sup>28</sup> suggests, plausibly, that Shakespeare may have written *Troilus and Cressida* for some festival occasion at one of the Inns of Court. Many features of the play would have been unsuited to the taste of Queen Elizabeth. Its vituperation goes so far that, as Mr. Alexander says, "the audience are at times addressed directly and familiarly by the most scurril character in the most scurril terms." And its impudent epilogue "prevents disapproval by implying that there will be no hissing except from bawds or panders or their unfortunate customers." But these impertinences were nicely calculated to please a crowd of gay and dissolute benchers.

At least one reference in the play tends to confirm this interesting hypothesis. Hector, in the course of the argument in which he seeks to prove that the universally accepted laws of morality demand that the Trojans send Helen back to her husband, says:

. . . . . these moral laws  
Of nature and of nations speak aloud  
To have her back return'd.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup>"*Troilus and Cressida*, 1609," *The Library*, 4th Ser., IX, 277-78.

<sup>29</sup>*Troilus and Cressida*, II, ii, 184-86. (Throughout this chapter, I have used, for my Shakespearean quotations, *The Complete Dramatic and Poetic Works of William Shakespeare*, ed. W. A. Neilson ["Cambridge Edition"; Boston and New York, 1906].)



The phrase, "laws of nature and of nations,"<sup>77</sup> here used correctly in the technical sense that it had lately acquired in the Latin vocabulary of international law, marks a recent development in juridical thinking. In it two conceptions of law, hitherto considered disparate, had united to form what was regarded as the one universal sanction of international law. The exact meaning of Hector's words would have been caught only by men who had been given a legal education, and who were familiar with a position first taken by Alberico Gentili (since 1587 Regius Professor of Civil Law at Oxford), in his work *De jure belli libri tres* (1598). The author, there for the first time, identifies *jus naturae*, in the sense of "law as implanted by nature in the human mind" or "law as capable of being demonstrated by reason," with *jus gentium*, meaning "rules common to the laws of all nations." Using this identification as a foundation for his subsequent discussion, Gentili devotes the rest of the work to the task of collecting and codifying the rules for the conduct of war. Hence the phrase, when put in the mouth of a character discussing the justice of a war, would have effected an immediate amused response from an audience of barristers but would have fallen dead upon the ears of a general audience.

It is also interesting to note that Pandarus, in his final impudent address to the audience, says,

Some two months hence my will shall here be made.

It should be now, . . .

The word "here" certainly has more significance if it be conceived as indicating a place where lawyers were assembled rather than a theatre, either public or private. These oblique references, particularly the one to Gentili, tend to confirm the opinion of Peter Alexander about the occasion for which *Troilus and Cressida* was written.

<sup>77</sup>This is certainly one of the earliest—if not the very earliest—appearances of the phrase thus correctly used in English. To be sure, the expression occurs in *Henry V*, written two years before. There Exeter addresses the French king as follows:

"He\* wills you, in the name of God Almighty,  
That you divest yourself, and lay apart  
The borrowed glories that by gift of heaven,  
By law of nature and of nations, longs  
To him and to his heirs."

\*Henry V.

(II, iv, 77-81.)

But in this passage the term has been given no precise technical meaning. In the first place, it does not apply to warfare. In the second place, the "law of nature" here is equivalent to the "right of inheritance." Shakespeare is merely employing a rotund phrase, with a transferred meaning, in an unfamiliar context.

Obviously such a play, assuming a dramatic form much less usual than tragedy, history, or comedy, would have been more easily understood and more readily accepted by an audience of barristers than by one gathered in a public theatre.\*

If Shakespeare had determined to write a comical satire for this special audience, the Troy story was entirely suitable for so unusual a project. The love story of Troilus and Cressida, from its first appearance in Benoît's *Le Roman de Troie*, has stimulated a satiric attitude in most authors who have told it. Benoît introduces the pair—Troilus and Briseida, he names them—at the time of their parting.

\*Evidence that Gentili's work was known to lawyers, and highly regarded, can be found in a book written by William Fulbecke in 1600 (*A Direction or Preparative to the study of the Lawe* [London: Thomas Wight, 1600]). It contains numerous references—all of them laudatory—to Gentili, who was lecturing at Oxford when Fulbecke was an undergraduate there. The following is typical: "that excellent Booke of *Albericus Gentilis*, a Civilian *De legationibus*, then which I have not seene any thing done with more plausible, artificiall, and exact methode which as it is verie hard for any to imitate, so it were to be wished, that he would in some other like treatise equall himselfe." (Sig. E.) He also makes approximately the same connection as that made by Gentili, between the law of nature and the law of nations. Fulbecke was a member of Gray's Inn, so that his interests and information may be fairly taken as similar to those of his fellow benchers.

Incidentally, this hypothesis aids in clearing up the apparently contradictory statements made about the play by the publishers of the two quarto editions which appeared in 1609. On the title-page of the first of these quartos is printed: "The Historie of Troylus and Cresseida. As it was acted by the Kings Majesties servants at the Globe." Yet in the preface of the second quarto, the reader is told he has "a new play, never stal'd with the Stage, never clapper-clawd with the palmes of the vulger." Critics have generally assumed that these phrases mean that the play had not been acted, and have given them various significations. One interpretation is that the words formed "a plain falsehood for advertising purposes." ("Cambridge" *Shakespeare*, ed. Neilson, p. 260.) A second is that they were "a quibble based on some alterations or omissions" (*ibid.*)—that is, based on the fact that this printed text differed in some respects from the acting version. A third interpretation is that, after the publisher had issued a number of copies of the quarto, he was informed that his assumption that *Troilus and Cressida* had been acted was wrong. He "hurried to make capital of so remarkable a fact." (J. Q. Adams, *A Life of William Shakespeare* [Boston and New York, 1923], pp. 348-49; also *The Library*, 4th Ser., IX, 268.) These interpretations are enumerated in Lawrence, *op. cit.*, pp. 130-31. Lawrence's suggestion is simpler. He believes that *Troilus and Cressida* was written, first, for one of the Inns of Court and presented about 1602. Later, probably in 1608 or 1609, it was put on the boards of the Globe Theatre, where naturally, because of its academic character, it proved a failure. That explains all the seemingly contradictory and purposely obscure statements. The publishers say, in substance, "This play which we now publish is recommended for its wit and its intellectual quality, not for obvious effects calculated to appeal to vulgar taste." Therein lies the distinguishing quality of *Troilus and Cressida*. Witness the fact that it has not appealed to the rabble and has never "been cheapened by their indiscriminating applause." (Lawrence, pp. 126-35.) In other words, here is a play written for a special audience and likely to interest all the intelligentsia.

They reappear in nine widely separated sections of the tale, which constitute a digression from the main plot. "He wished," says Griffin, "to relieve the monotony of his war narrative by providing a representation, not of the constancy of a faithful lover but of the inconstancy of a faithless mistress."<sup>8</sup> Such a story almost automatically became a vehicle for conventional satiric comment on women's infidelity.<sup>9</sup> That was the inevitable result of the contemplation of the manners and morals of a primitive Greece by a medieval Christian who was also sympathetic with the ideals of courtly love. Conduct that was natural, even praiseworthy, in a female Greek slave, violated all the canons of the official system of amorous behavior. Thus a woman who to the Greeks was a kind of romantic heroine, became a creature to deplore and to deride. The characteristics which Benoît attributed to his Briseida clung to her successor, Cressida, wherever she appeared. In general, it is true to say that those presentations of her story that preserve and deepen the satiric attitude initiated by Benoît form the best works of art. By the time of Shakespeare, as Professor Rollins has clearly shown, the main elements of the tale had become fixed. Cressida was always a wanton, sometimes a harlot; Troilus was a young warrior ruined by an unworthy love for her; and Pandarus was a leering pimp. Where could Shakespeare find a fable better adapted to his continuation of that combination of excoriation and derision of sexual indulgence which the satirist had made a literary fashion. Critics are mistaken in believing that Shakespeare was incapable of appreciating Chaucer's conception of Cressida or that his realistic sense was repelled by it. They fail to perceive that Chaucer's Cressida, who was to him only one of a crowd of women of that name, did not lend herself to the dramatic purpose which Shakespeare had in mind when he devised his *Troilus and Cressida*. The heroes of the Homeric war story suffered a similar degeneration on their way to the Renaissance. In the *Iliad*, Achilles lives in a world of purely personal relationships and so can seem heroic, in

<sup>8</sup>*The Filostrato of Giovanni Boccaccio*, tr. N. E. Griffin and A. B. Myrick, with an Introduction by Griffin (Philadelphia, 1929), p. 32.

<sup>9</sup>The following is a typical intrusion of the author: "Fickle and infirm, her feelings were very soon changed; very weak and inconstant was her heart. Dearly did those of loyal heart pay for that; often they suffered pain and evil on that account." (*The Story of Troilus as Told by Benoît de Sainte-Maure, Giovanni Boccaccio [translated into English Prose]*, Geoffrey Chaucer, and Robert Henryson, tr. R. K. Gordon [London, 1934], p. 14.)

spite of being an utterly selfish individualist. He fights for glory, not for the welfare of any social group, large or small. To medieval writers, animated by the ideals of chivalry, such an egotistical Achilles became an embodiment of treacherous cruelty. His slaying of Troilus, and still more his killing of Hector, were regarded as savage murder. Hector, the Trojan, had become a model of chivalric courtesy, whose actions mitigated the brutality of war as Achilles waged it. Hector, in some of the versions, had even come to doubt the validity of military values. In Caxton he questions whether war is worth the high price it exacts of an individual. Even in Benoît he admits he would sooner have his fill "of love and sleep and sweet song and dance delectable than of war."

Medieval men would also look upon Thersites, a railer at nobles and kings, as the basest sort of schismatic and as a buffoon. Ajax, a simple, stalwart fighter in Homer, by the sixteenth century had been reduced to an arrogant and awkward boaster. This deterioration was the result, partly of another ancient tradition about Ajax, and partly of a confusion of him with Ajax Oïleus, who in a race with Odysseus exhibits grotesque awkwardness. In Lydgate, even Hector sometimes acts from unworthy motives. His slaying of a Grecian king in order to possess himself of his victim's valuable armor is execrated as a form of greed. In short, by Shakespeare's time these Homeric heroes, no longer a band of youths fighting joyously in the sunlight on the plains of Troy, appeared as a group of undisciplined individuals acting at cross-purposes. They were often driven to action by evil passion, and frequently revealed conduct that would seem base to all those gentlemen of the time who still retained some of the generous impulses of chivalry. The tale of Troy, therefore, had become a story well suited to serve as a picture of social disintegration, which Shakespeare decided to paint in dark colors.

### III. *The War Story*

To apprehend clearly the main lines of the dramatic construction of *Troilus and Cressida*, we shall do well to accept one element of Professor Tucker Brooke's analysis<sup>a</sup> of the play. He suggests that Shakespeare derived his conception of the Trojan world from Fiston's

<sup>a</sup>*Yale Review*, XVII, 574-75.

version of Caxton's *Recuyell* (1596), and his point of view toward the Greek host from Chapman's *Homer*. For this reason, as we have seen, he regarded the principal Trojan warriors as dishonest, dastardly, or utterly unable to obey the dictates of either conscience or judgment. As for the Greeks, Shakespeare, following Chapman, turns Homer's "temperamental primitives" into "arrant cowards, braggarts, and bullies." Whether or not one fully concurs in Professor Brooke's ideas about the sources of the play, one recognizes that the features which he discerns in each picture are those emphasized by Shakespeare. They furnish clues to the understanding of his view of each army.

Shakespeare presents the conditions in the Greek host in such a way as to make them express the same political philosophy as that he had illustrated in some of his "histories." His conviction was that social chaos inevitably occurred whenever a magistrate was unable or unwilling to exercise his "specialty of rule." The last two parts of *Henry VI* and *Richard II* present a situation of that sort. In both of these dramas the social confusion is dramatized by a conventional tragic action which ends in the fall of a prince. *Measure for Measure*, probably written shortly after *Troilus and Cressida*, displays Vienna in a condition of political and moral disintegration, because the Duke has weakly refused to perform his essential duty to enforce the laws of his state.

✓ In *Troilus and Cressida* a like situation is accorded dramatic treatment different in kind, at least from that in the history plays. The action ends in no catastrophe for any individual and with no tragic catharsis for the audience. Instead, it reaches a conclusion appropriate to satire, in that the feeling dominant in the denouement is a sense of the characters' ridiculous futility, rather than sympathy with their sufferings or gay satisfaction over their attainment of happiness. The course of the fable neither purges turbulent emotions nor creates elation. It leaves the audience suffused with cynical amusement. It presents no reform, but by exposing the folly and the sin of the characters who come to this dead end it fulfils the principal aim of satiric derision—moral enlightenment.

How does Shakespeare build up, for his audience, his picture of a social institution in a condition of chaos? Ulysses draws the first sketch in a manner appropriate to the dramatic blood brother of

Macilente and Criticus and others fulfilling their office in comical satire. In his great speech on degree he enunciates the ethical and political standards by which the anarchistic folly of the Greek warriors is judged and found ridiculous and socially destructive. A careful perusal of that key speech will result in the conviction that what Shakespeare attacks in *Troilus and Cressida* is not war as an institution but, rather, war as carried on by individuals who, because of their insubordination to rightfully constituted authority, are incapable of joining forces for a coherent social effort. His thesis is:

. . . . . O, when degree is shak'd,  
Which is the ladder to all high designs,  
Then enterprize is sick! . . . . .  
.  
.  
.  
Take but degree away, untune that string,  
And, hark, what discord follows!"

The action of the drama, so far as it concerns both groups of warriors, illustrates this text. It shows the complete social and moral confusion that results when socially reasonable action is thwarted by the continual triumph of subversive personal emotion or even of mere whim. Plans formed by reason, and so recognized when the characters are temporarily rational, are totally destroyed because, when they begin to act, these men become the slaves of some passion. Then they forthwith illustrate Thersites' characterization of them as creatures of "too much blood and too little brain." Conduct which has thus completely abjured the guidance of reason inevitably produces a morally topsy-turvy crowd of schismatics.

Achilles is presented as the chief architect of the chaos. He has created the most serious problem for the Greek general staff. His wounded self-love has driven him into recalcitrant individualism. The wily Ulysses therefore devises a scheme which he believes will purge Achilles of his humour of pride. The design is to have the Greeks pretend that the blockish Ajax is in their opinion the worthier antagonist for Hector—"for that," he says, "will physic the great Myrmidon." To accomplish this result Ulysses must first manipulate Ajax into an attitude that will make him eager to fight Hector. His plot designed to attain that end has the incidental merit of driving the lout into a supreme display of fatuous boasting:

"I, iii, 101-3, 109-10.



state in which his mind lies fallow to an artful cultivation of distaste for his continued abstention from battle and the common effort. Ulysses then comes into his presence reading a book and cleverly quoting from it a passage which illuminates Achilles' situation. Indeed, the wily schemer uses the passage as a text for the homily which he proceeds to deliver. His arguments are of two sorts. The first is that man cannot, by flouting the good opinion of his fellows, accumulate material on which justifiable self-esteem may feed. Tomorrow Ajax will prove how the contrary is true, by accepting the opportunity that chance offers him to win renown. Ulysses suggests that this lubber is merely picking up the honor cast off by Achilles:

. . . . . O heavens, what some men do,  
While some men leave to do!  
How some men creep in skittish Fortune's hall,  
Whiles others play the idiots in her eyes!<sup>100</sup>

Achilles will be dense, indeed, if he fails to realize that his course is folly for a man who seeks to "plume up his will" and keep his pride unsullied.

Ulysses' second argument is that heroic action, if it is to be highly regarded, must be continuous. Man quickly forgets, or—to put the idea into more philosophical language—time destroys, past achievements, however glorious. This truth he expresses in one of the most profound of the philosophical lyrics in which the play abounds:

For Time is like a fashionable host  
That slightly shakes his parting guest by the hand,  
And with his arms outstretch'd, as he would fly,  
Grasps in the comer. Welcome ever smiles,  
And farewell goes out sighing. O, let not virtue seek  
Remuneration for the thing it was;  
For beauty, wit,  
High birth, vigour of bone, desert in service,  
Love, friendship, charity, are subjects all  
To envious and calumniating Time.<sup>101</sup>

Such passages of high seriousness give one the impression that, after all, there is a villain in the play and that his name is Time. Growing time is never ripened to the will of any of the actors on

<sup>100</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 132-35.

<sup>101</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 165-74.



this stage of Troy. They all float supinely in its languid current. So they must accept its slow pace as a substitute for any inner necessity, and be content though it carries them to every crossroad of destiny, too late to reach and grapple successfully with Fate, who has already established himself there in a commanding position." That fact makes the characters slaves of events. They are thus unable to reach goals set up by either their reason or their passions.

Ulysses directs his argument against Achilles on the assumption that he is a victim of pride and vanity. But now it appears for the first time that the commander's refusal to fight is partly due to an amorous complication. Achilles is in love with one of Priam's daughters, and chivalric love forbids him to seek the death of her kinsman. At that critical moment Patroclus comes to Ulysses' aid, urging his fellow in arms to break the strangle hold that "the weak wanton Cupid" has fastened upon him and to re-emerge as the famous warrior. Achilles seems to be impressed. He realizes how deep an injury he has done his good name.

I see my reputation is at stake;  
My fame is shrewdly gored.\*

At this point, then, Achilles recognizes that his conduct is folly.

Ulysses, in the combined roles of commentator and wit-intriguer, has precipitated one of the situations essential to satiric comedy. He has exposed the fool or humourist. In most plays of the type, Achilles would immediately have announced his intention to divest himself of his pride and his amorous fondness. So he would have done here, had he been in any degree amenable to reason. But, in the composition of his nature, blood ruled and prevented him from acting rationally. Hence the expected purgation does not take place.

Ajax, it will be noted, plays a negligible part in bringing Ulysses' plan to even the limited success it enjoys. For that reason critics have accused Shakespeare of leaving his threads at loose ends at this point in the execution of his plans. But Ulysses could accomplish his purpose without driving Ajax to a fatal encounter with Hector. The mere announcement of the scheme, cleverly interpreted by its wily originator, was enough to convince Achilles' intellect of the absurdity of his conduct. But, at just the moment when he should

\*This conception was suggested by the leading article of *The [London] Times Literary Supplement*, May 19, 1932.

\*III, iii, 227-28.

renounce his folly, he remembers his love and his duties toward it, and he deliberately refuses to do what Ulysses' scheme, confirmed by his eloquent logic, has shown him to be of sound sense.

Reason cannot bring him back to his social obligations. Only when the killing of Patroclus arouses in him a tempest of grief and rage does he return to battle. Then he acts, not like a soldier obeying the rules of warfare, but like a man insane with rage; so failure overtakes Ulysses' nicely devised plan to induce this Olympian school-boy to obey the dictates of self-interest as rationalized and implemented by a social ideal. The outcome, as in the case of all the other efforts of the characters, whether reasonable or irrational, is futility, and was meant to awaken scornful laughter.

Attached to the play's subtly varied conventional program for the exposure and reform of the humourous character is Thersites. He with all of his scurrility was to be found in Homer. Professor W. B. Drayton Henderson<sup>39</sup> suggests that the characteristics which the abusive fellow displays in *Troilus and Cressida* are merely an expansion of Homer's brief description in the *Iliad* as translated by Chapman:

Thersites only would speak all. A most disorder'd store  
Of words he foolishly pour'd out, . . . . .  
. . . . .  
But he the filthiest fellow was of all that had deserts  
In Troy's brave siege.<sup>40</sup>

But the derivation of Thersites' vituperation does not explain his dramatic function in *Troilus and Cressida*. Consequently the critics have been busy in efforts to define and clarify his role. Brandes, referring to the same lines of Chapman's translation, sets the text for the exposition of numerous subsequent writers:

Clearly enough, the character of the witty, malicious lampooner made an impression upon Shakespeare, and he, probably following the example of earlier plays, transformed him into a clown, and made him act as chorus accompanying the action of the play. . . . Thersites is undoubtedly used as a kind of Satyr-chorus.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup>"Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida* Yet Deeper in Its Tradition," in *Essays in Dramatic Literature: The Parrott Presentation Volume*, ed. Hardin Craig (Princeton, 1935), p. 152.

<sup>40</sup>Bk. 2, ll. 181-82, 186-87 (*The Works of George Chapman: Homer's Iliad and Odyssey*, ed. R. H. Shepherd [London, 1875], p. 31).

<sup>41</sup>George Brandes, *William Shakespeare: A Critical Study* (Eng. tr.; London, 1898), II, 207-8.

Many of the critics feel that their duty to Thersites has been fulfilled when they have described him as either a chorus or a fool. They have thus recognized that his functions as commentator are like those of two other figures long traditional in drama. But to suggest that he is identical with either of these figures is misleading. Thersites is neither a chorus nor a clown. A chorus suggests classical drama or English Senecan tragedy—forms utterly unlike that of *Troilus and Cressida*. Moreover, a chorus presents, if not the moral views of the author, at least the values by which he wishes the actions of the dramatis personae to be judged, or else it is the ally of the stage manager, recounting events which cannot be crowded into the two hours' traffic of the stage. Thersites fulfils neither of these offices. His voice is not the voice of Shakespeare. All the other characters in the play realize that his opinions are worthless, and say so. If the late Sir Walter Raleigh had remembered that fact, he would not have attributed to Thersites the railer so important a part in setting the tone of this bitter comedy as he does in the following sentences:

The failure and miscarriage of everything through human lust and human weakness is the only principle of coherence in the composite play, and accordingly Thersites is its hero. Yet Thersites is made odious; so that we are left with the impression that the author, after mocking at love and war and statecraft, mocks also at his own disaffection."

To regard Thersites as a kind of court fool gives a more accurate impression of his comic office. Tatlock" says that he is "quite definitely the Fool of the play," introduced to relieve the heaviness of the deliberations which form so large a part of it.

Professor Drayton Henderson's" conception of the derivation of the character is set forth with greater precision. He writes: "Undoubtedly this [the Thersites of Homer, as he appeared in Chapman's translation] was the original. But the original had been fed by the spirit of satire prevalent around the date of 1600 in London, before he became the dominating and bitter 'fool' of the play." The wise fool, he continues, had been devised by Erasmus, in his *Praise of Folly*," to represent the spirit of Folly itself. "Shakespeare turns the

"Sir Walter Raleigh, *Shakespeare* (London, 1907), p. 117.

"*Sewanee Review*, XXIV, 139.

"*Op. cit.*, p. 152.

"This book was well known to Elizabethan men of letters in Chaloner's translation,

Wise Fool into Thersites, and fits him with Erasmian cap and bells—jangled out of tune and harsh."<sup>44</sup> Professor Henderson also suggests that, in 1602, Shakespeare had a special incentive for introducing Erasmus' wise fool into his play, in "the advent of Armin to the Lord Chamberlain's Company in 1600 with his special talent and his *Six Sortes of Sottes*."<sup>45</sup>

It is true that Thersites is a court fool in that he seems to be attached to Ajax as a kind of licensed jester. Achilles reminds Patroclus of that fact when the latter threatens to punish Thersites for scoring too palpable a hit: "He is a privileg'd man. Proceed, Thersites."<sup>46</sup> But the fool in Shakespeare, even after the dramatist began to fit the role to Armin's line, is radically different from Thersites. No matter how great the clown's impudence, he always uses it merely as a cover from which arrows barbed with common sense may be shot at his victims. Hence the wise fool, of whom the Fool in *King Lear* is the most notable example, has a single fixed purpose—to clear the eyes of his master from dangerous illusions. He never resembles Thersites by making opprobrious speech an end in itself.

In any case, why should so far-sought a model for Thersites be suggested, when a more complete one lies much nearer at hand. Thersites is a railer, a detractor, and a buffoon in exactly the same sense as was Carlo Buffone, and he makes an identical contribution to the satiric spirit of the drama. In the exercise of his office, Thersites, too, in his comments does not observe fitness of time, place, or language. His envy, which we are given to understand is his ruling passion,<sup>47</sup> serves as the recognized credentials for his satiric office. But, being a "prophane Jester," he reflects the author's point of view only in the import of his outbursts and not in their tone. Like Carlo's his speech is designed to evoke amusement and aversion simultane-

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the first edition of which appeared in 1549 (*The praise of Folie. Moriae encomium . . . Englished by sir Thomas Chaloner*).

<sup>44</sup>Henderson, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

<sup>45</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>46</sup>II, iii, 61-62.

<sup>47</sup>Thersites ends a soliloquy (in which he seeks to "see some issue of my spiteful execrations," by enlisting the aid of the gods) with the words, "I have said my prayers, and devil Envy say Amen" (II, iii, 6-7, 21-22). Achilles addresses him, "How now, thou core of envy!" (V, i, 4), and Patroclus, "Why, thou damnable box of envy, thou, what mean'st thou to curse thus?" (V, i, 29-30).

ously. His penchant for bold, "adulterate similes" is as incorrigible as that of Carlo. Cordatus thus described Buffone's inclination: "No honourable or reverend personage whatsoever, can come within the reach of his eye, but is turn'd into all manner of varietie, by his adult'rate *simile's*." The imaginative "variety" which Thersites shares with Carlo amuses the audience even while arousing its derision. The verbal virtuosity which Thersites' contempt of the Greeks stimulates is of the essence of his comico-satiric contribution to the play. For example, his manner of describing Ajax is as follows:

Why, he stalks up and down like a peacock,—a stride and a stand; ruminates like an hostess that hath no arithmetic but her brain to set down her reckoning; bites his lip with a politic regard, as who should say there were wit in his head, an't would out; and so there is, but it lies as coldly in him as fire in a flint, which will not show without knocking.<sup>80</sup>

This string of similes forms a description of Ajax that contains only a little exaggeration. Toward him the spectators can hardly assume too vehement an attitude of derision. Nor is Thersites' unrestrained metaphorical excoriation of Patroclus as Achilles' "masculine whore" unduly severe for a traditional satiric utterance of a detestable truth. As we have seen, Marston and his fellows had established an English convention of scourging sexual abnormalities with the savagery of Juvenal.<sup>81</sup> Hence Thersites' railing would be regarded by an audience of benchers as written in exactly the right key:

. . . thou idle immaterial skein of sleeve-silk, thou green sarcenet flap for a sore eye, thou tassel of a prodigal's purse, . . . Ah, how the poor world is pest' red with such waterflies, diminutives of nature!<sup>82</sup>

His appetite for detraction, when sated on Agamemnon and Menelaus, seems less justified. Then it becomes a part of his Carlo-like role of "common jester, a violent railer." His comments on the meaning of the events and the individual follies that drive the action to futility run the gamut from intelligent comment to foul billingsgate. When he says of Achilles and Patroclus, "With too much blood and too little brain, these two may run mad,"<sup>83</sup> he is presenting Shake-

<sup>80</sup>III, iii, 251-57.

<sup>81</sup>See above, pp. 43-46.

<sup>82</sup>V, i, 35-39.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 52-53.

spere's thesis and providing the audience with a standard by which to judge the conduct of the pair and to understand its utter vanity. But when he sums up the Trojan war in such phrases as "All the argument is a cuckold and a whore"<sup>84</sup> and "Lechery, lechery; still wars and lechery; nothing else holds fashion,"<sup>85</sup> though he may permanently jaundice the eyes of all beholders he must be regarded as playing his role of buffoon, to their delight. When, however, he sinks into spouting long passages of spiteful execration, he becomes no more than a foul-mouthed railer, inviting a completely hostile response from his hearers.

Many critics have applied to Thersites the deserved epithet, "the most un-Shakespearean figure" in all the dramatist's works. But the reason is not that the author, when contriving him, designed him to be the mouthpiece of a deep personal despair. The real explanation is much less subjective. It is merely that he tried to transform the Homeric Thersites into one of the conventional, well-nigh indispensable characters of the new satiric comedy. The figure successfully performs all the various offices of the railer and buffoon. If he is offensive in the discharge of his dramatic duties, that is because Shakespeare's higher emotional intensity and superiority in imagination lend to characters, endurable in the art of lesser men, qualities that are aesthetically unacceptable.

The Trojans in *Troilus and Cressida* fare no better than the Greeks. They are a crowd of individuals who have also forsaken reason, but in order to follow slightly different courses of wayward emotion. As we have seen, they probably came to Shakespeare from the pages of Caxton's *Recuyell*, where they had already become tainted with ignobility. In spite of critics, like G. Wilson Knight,<sup>86</sup> who believe that the Trojans were intended to represent some sort of ideal values, Shakespeare presents them as predominantly irrational and foolish. They first appear gathered in a council of war corresponding to that held by the Greeks. Their representative of wisdom is Hector. Like Ulysses, he is an intellectual mouthpiece of the author.

<sup>84</sup>II, iii, 78-79.

<sup>85</sup>V, ii, 195-97.

<sup>86</sup>"The Philosophy of Troilus and Cressida," in his *The Wheel of Fire* (Oxford, 1930), pp. 51-79. In this essay he presents the curious notion that the Greeks represent pedestrian reason, but that the Trojans stand for intuition, a much nobler faculty of the mind. Almost all Elizabethans would have thought such an idea quite absurd, if they could possibly have apprehended it.

He argues that Helen is not worth the sacrifice which would be involved in insisting on the protection of Paris in his possession of her. Hector's attitude provokes a wild protest from Troilus:

. . . . . Nay, if we talk of reason,  
Let's shut our gates and sleep. Manhood and honour  
Should have hare hearts, would they but fat their thoughts  
With this cramm'd reason. Reason and respect"<sup>7</sup>  
Makes livers pale and lustihood deject."<sup>8</sup>

This speech seems to Mr. Knight to be an expression of "absolute faith in a supreme value," but to an audience of Elizabethan lawyers it would more likely seem to be a form of *hybris*. Openly to defy reason would be to summon a devil of passion to seize one's soul. But Troilus proceeds to seek a rational justification of his declaration in favor of complete emotional emancipation. He asks, "What is aught, but as 'tis valu'd?" And Hector answers with a veiled plea for individual and subjective ethical sanctions, in a speech enunciating the main principles of the moral system that the Renaissance had constructed out of Aristotle's ethical principles.

But value dwells not in particular will;  
. . . . .  
. . . . . 'Tis mad idolatry  
To make the service greater than the god;  
And the will dotes that is inclineable  
To what infectiously itself affects,  
Without some image of the affected merit."<sup>9</sup>

These somewhat tortuous lines mean that desire, when it attributes to objects such values as exist only in subjective feeling, is sheer dotage. In other words, Hector is here warning Troilus against letting his will divorce itself from reason and become the servant of his appetites. But the young rebel is unconvinced and is confirmed in his error by Paris, who urges that the demands of honor are stronger than those of reason. Such heresy brings an even deeper rebuke from Hector to both of the youths. He says that they talk like those immature, superficial men

. . . . . whom Aristotle thought  
Unfit to hear moral philosophy."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup>I.e., consideration of the consequences.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 53-60.

<sup>9</sup>II, ii, 46-50.

<sup>10</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 166-67.

Besides, the laws which bind men together into societies based upon friendly, ordered relationships demand that Helen be sent back to her husband. It is at this point that Hector appeals to the theories of Alberico Gentili as sanctioning his position. The Elizabethans would accept as self-evident the soundness of that point of view. As Professor Lawrence remarks,<sup>4</sup> "There was no place in Elizabethan ethics for adultery"—nor, one may add, for fornication. Hector, then, would have the approval of an audience in his warning to both Troilus and Paris:

The reasons you allege do more conduce  
To the hot passion of distemp' red blood  
Than to make up a free determination  
'Twixt right and wrong, for pleasure and revenge  
Have ears more deaf than adders to the voice  
Of any true decision.<sup>4</sup>

These wise words prove to be prophetic. Troilus follows unreasonable pleasure and becomes the slave of the wanton Cressida. He follows turbulent, irrational courses of revenge and is left rushing wildly and futilely after his rival, whom he is doomed never to overtake.

But Hector straightway repudiates everything that he has so eloquently said. Though admitting that to keep Helen is to persist in wrong, he lamely abandons his logically sound position. He decides that, in spite of reason and common sense, the Trojans, after all, must defend Paris' rape in order to maintain their "joint and several dignities." He thereby yields his rational leadership to a democracy of passions and takes the fatal step that ends in the ruin of himself and of his cause. We must not forget, however, that Troilus is "the prime mover" of the Greeks to this desperate course of action. In his activities as a warrior he early professes himself to be a truant from reason. And a young man who forswears his allegiance to reason can be confidently expected, when he falls in love, to let his blood rule his safer guides. Troilus the warrior and Troilus the lover thus represent different aspects of a life which has deliberately given up all rational control.

### *III. The Love Story*

Many critics find it very difficult to admit that Shakespeare gives

<sup>4</sup>*Shakespeare's Problem Comedies*, p. 154.

<sup>4</sup>II, ii, 168-73.



the love story an intentionally derisive treatment. Like most other mortals, they love a lover, and so cannot resist regarding the author's depiction of both Troilus and Cressida as sympathetic. They appear romantically admirable. Nevertheless, it seems clear that Shakespeare meant their lives to exemplify a form of lust and so to be bound for inevitable disaster. Yet each has valiant defenders. Tradition had made Cressida so obvious a wanton by Shakespeare's time that she has found fewer apologists than Troilus. But their number is considerable. Among them appears Professor Tucker Brooke. He describes with persuasive eloquence what he conceives to be Cressida's pathetic situation.

In her relations with both her lovers he [Shakespeare] shows us the pathos of a daintiness reaching vainly after nobility, a wistful sincerity which knows it lacks strength to be the thing it would be. . . . Ulysses [may] cry, "Fie, fie, upon her!" But Shakespeare does not cry "Fie!" Rather, I think, we hear him whisper, "But yet the pity of it, Ulysses! O Ulysses, the pity of it!"<sup>88</sup>

Perhaps, as Professor Hyder Rollins says, "In the light of the history of the love story, the remarkable thing really is that Shakespeare dealt with her so mildly."<sup>89</sup> It is still easier to assent to Herford's observation: "Compared with the profligate women of Restoration Comedy she has a certain girlish air of grace and innocence."<sup>90</sup> But Professor Brooke surely throws Cressida completely out of dramatic focus in associating her in our minds with the passionately lamented Desdemona.

Mr. Hamill Kenny, in a recent article, labors to prove that the oaths of fidelity which Troilus and Cressida swear to each other in the third act of the play constituted, for an Elizabethan audience, a trothplight or an Elizabethan common-law marriage "by a *sponsalia de praesenti* or precontract." Therefore, "their cohabitation . . . turns out to be the legitimate and normal consequence of marriage and entirely beyond reproach!"<sup>91</sup> Such an interpretation of the scene reduces the entire play to nonsense. It makes of every preceding scene in which either of the lovers appears, merely inept

<sup>88</sup>*Yale Review*, XVII, 573-74.

<sup>89</sup>*PMLA*, XXXII, 427.

<sup>90</sup>C. H. Herford, *Shakespeare's Treatment of Love & Marriage, and Other Essays* (London, 1921), p. 40.

<sup>91</sup>Hamill Kenny, "Shakespeare's Cressida," *Anglia*, LXI, 171-72.

preparation for this touching marriage rite, and renders every subsequent scene dramatically illogical. Fortunately, it is demonstrably wrong. It lacks the one verbal formula essential to the ceremony of precontract. All extant examples of that sort of agreement contain some such phrases as "I take you for my husband" and "I take you for my wife," made while the contracting parties held hands.<sup>77</sup> Anyone familiar with the relic of the trothplight in the Scotch common-law rite which is the foundation of W. S. Gilbert's comedy *Engaged*, will recognize that fact. If the swearing of oaths which the entire audience knew were soon to be broken was at all suggestive of a precontract, the ceremony must have been hailed as only a hilarious travesty. Pandarus' speech beginning, "Go to, a bargain made; seal it, seal it, I'll be the witness."<sup>78</sup> employs the language and spirit of parody and is an appropriately leering blessing for the consummation of an assignation.

The contemporary searchers for the absolute in Shakespeare's works see in Troilus a metaphysical lover seeking the ineffable in his experience, but "thwarted inwardly by the fine knowledge of human limitations."<sup>79</sup> Or they conceive the transcendental Cressida as striving to keep the infinite value that Troilus sets up for her "out of touch with the disappointing finite."<sup>80</sup> These pseudo profundities are perhaps inevitable responses of certain types of mind to the eloquent philosophical lyricism in which all the characters express

<sup>77</sup>A transcript of such a ceremony can be found in C. J. Sisson, *Lost Plays of Shakespeare's Age* (Cambridge, 1936), p. 28. The man, Field, and the girl, Agnes, go through the following dialogue:

"Field . . . I pray yow tell me . . . whether yow can be content to forsake all men for my sake & to take me to your husband.

Agnes . . . I am content to love & lyke yow above all men & to take yow for my husband.

Field . . . (*takes Agnes' hand*, . . .) I protest before god . . . that . . . I take thee to my wife & thereupon I give thee my faith & trothe & if thou canst doe the like to me give me thy hand (*lets her hand fall*).

Agnes (*gives Field her hand*) I can & doe & thereupon I give yow my hand & my faith."

The ceremony in Lyly's *Mother Bombe* (IV, i, 57-58), between Candius and Livia, is not definitely a trothplight, because Candius immediately cries, ". . . let us now conclude it in the next Church." But even in this informal pledging of faith, he says (ll. 47-48): "taking thee for the staffe of my age, and of my youth my solace." (*Works*, ed. Bond, III, 207.)

<sup>78</sup>III, ii, 204-5.

<sup>79</sup>The phrase appears in Knight, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

<sup>80</sup>This is the idea of Professor Henderson, which he expresses in his "Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*," *op. cit.*, p. 140.

themselves when under stress of emotion. But there is little likelihood that even a quick-witted Elizabethan gentleman could have been able so far to transcend the thought patterns of the age as to anticipate nineteenth-century schools of idealist philosophy.

After this display of the irrational tendency of many men to regard every woman lover in fiction as in some sense desirable, it is refreshing to read a woman's clearheaded appraisal of Shakespeare's Cressida. Mrs. Olwen Campbell is not blinded by the obvious sexual charms of an actress and a wanton. She says:

Critics with whom Thersites and Pandarus have disagreed are frequently found to strain at Cressida. But this is the result of trying to swallow her: whereas she is meant to be rejected. Not, according to the distorted and unimaginative view of a certain well-known modern Shakespearean scholar, because the great dramatist was ever liable to an attack of the bilious malady of woman-hatred, but simply because Cressida is the villain of the piece.<sup>7</sup>

To call Cressida a *villain* is slightly misleading, because the term suggests that she plays a part in a tragedy. In all other respects Mrs. Campbell's comment is unassailable.

Troilus was also meant to be rejected. But many critics who spew Cressida out of their mouths attempt to swallow him. They persist in seeing in him an honorable, inexperienced young man seduced and ruined by a sensual and calculating woman. Thus conceived, Troilus becomes a tragic figure—a younger and more sympathetic Antony. Lawrence, for example, regards him as a highly emotional boy, with a strong sexual nature, who becomes heartsick at the faithlessness of his mistress. He is, in the words of Boas,<sup>8</sup> a "chivalrous adorer." Wilson Knight<sup>9</sup> makes him a perfect metaphysical lover. He is not only "ardent and faithful," but also one "who would champion to the uttermost throughout time with all his resources of reason and action his once plighted faith in a timeless experience." He fails and suffers because the attainment of such a desire is humanly impossible. "It is trying to make infinite a thing which is 'a slave to limit.'" Almost certainly, Troilus' love story could have taken on no such meaning for Shakespeare or his audience.

<sup>7</sup>Olwen W. Campbell, "Troilus and Cressida: A Justification," *The London Mercury*, IV, 51.

<sup>8</sup>Shakspere and His Predecessors, p. 376.

<sup>9</sup>Op. cit., pp. 68-77, *passim*.

Rollins is clearly on the right track when he says: "Troilus himself, though irreproachable as a warrior, in his relations with her [Cressida] hardly warrants one's sympathy. There is no mistaking the sensuality of his desires when for the first time he is to meet her alone."<sup>76</sup>

The love affair of a deliberately seductive woman and a sensual man, however inexperienced, is not a natural subject for tragedy. Neither of the two is able to win sympathy at the expense of the other, and so become a natural tragic protagonist. On the other hand, the issues raised by such a tale are too serious for the merriment or happy ending of comedy. But lust had been, as already amply shown, a favorite subject—perhaps the favorite one—of English satirists throughout the 1590's. Shakespeare thus realized that the story of Troilus and Cressida, regarded as the adventures of two virtuosi in sensuality, would display its characteristic features to the best advantage if given the form of a comical satire. He met the first requirement of the literary type by adding to Pandarus' traditional office of pimp, that of satiric observer and mordant commentator. In this way Shakespeare kept the attitude of his audience toward the lovers continuously critical and derisive.

Troilus, however, clearly reveals the nature of his passion, without help from Pandarus. Shakespeare, as we have seen, early presents him as a warrior who makes a virtue of emancipating his will from the control of his reason. When a man with such a philosophy of conduct falls in love, he inevitably becomes passion's slave. His first speech exhibits him, at least in prospect, as an expert in sensuality:

I am giddy; expectation whirls me round.  
The imaginary relish is so sweet  
That it enchants my sense; what will it be,  
When that the watery palates taste indeed  
Love's thrice repured nectar? Death, I fear me,  
Swooning destruction, or some joy too fine,  
Too subtle, potent, tun'd too sharp in sweetness  
For the capacity of my ruder powers.  
I fear it much; and I do fear besides  
That I shall lose distinction in my joys.<sup>77</sup>

Wilson Knight finds this speech an expression of unsatisfied aspiration or of dismay at "the feared impossibility of actual fruition."<sup>78</sup>

<sup>76</sup>PMLA, XXXII, 383.

<sup>77</sup>III, ii, 19-28.

<sup>78</sup>Op. cit., p. 69. What this second phrase means I do not exactly understand, unless it be "fear of proving impotent"!

A more realistic observer would pronounce it the "agony of unsatisfied sexual desire." Troilus is beset with the sexual gourmet's anxiety lest the morsel which he is about to devour will be so ravishing that thereafter he will lose his sense of nice distinctions in sexual experience. For Troilus is not meant to suggest Shakespeare's idea of a brutish lover, but the educated sensuality of an Italianate English roué.

If confirmation of the opinion that this soliloquy expresses not love but sophisticated licentiousness is needed, it can be found in Lyly's depiction of the lover, Eumenides, in his *Endimion*. There is no question about the nature of Eumenides' emotion. His passion for Semele is contrasted unfavorably with the correct platonic love which Endimion feels for Cynthia. Eumenides has Troilus' apprehension that the awaited experience will be so overpoweringly pleasurable that he will lose his capacity for continued sexual delight.

. . . whome should I aske but *Semele*? the possessing of whose person is a pleasure that cannot come within the compasse of comparison; . . . I pray thee, fortune, when I shall first meete with fayre *Semele*, dash my delight with some light disgrace, least imbracing sweetnesse beyond measure, I take a surfit without recure: let her practise her accustomed coynesse, that I may dyet my selfe upon my desires: otherwise the fulnesse of my joyes will diminish the sweetnesse, and I shall perrish by them before I possesse them."

Few if any persons in an Elizabethan audience, after listening to such a speech as that of Eumenides or of Troilus, would have any doubts about the sort of meeting each is wantonly anticipating. On the chance, however, that someone may still be left in the dark, Shakespeare puts Pandarus forward to comment in a manner unmistakable even to a "thrice repured" mind. G. B. Harrison does not exaggerate when he writes that Pandarus "leads in Cressida with greasy chuckles of satisfaction."<sup>78</sup> He gives the pair such chaste instructions as: "Rub on, and kiss the mistress. How now! a kiss in fee-farm"<sup>79</sup>—in other words, "Give her a kiss that will last forever." This should be long enough to satisfy Troilus' agony of "unsatisfied aspiration."

Cressida plays the temptress part not too subtly to make her intentions perfectly clear. She uses those arts of coquetry which she knows

<sup>78</sup>*Endimion*, III, iv, 91-102 (*Works*, III, 49).

<sup>79</sup>*Shakespeare at Work*, p. 225.

<sup>80</sup>III, ii, 51-52.

will most successfully tease and intensify her lover's passion. She wishes to enjoy it at its most ardent moment. Troilus responds to her efforts in the key of his first sensuous soliloquy:

Oh that I thought it could be in a woman—  
As, if it can, I will presume in you—  
To feed for aye her lamp and flames of love.<sup>80</sup>

On the surface, he seems to be merely appealing for fidelity. But that wish, as in the case of Sir Willoughby Patterne, is his response to a fear that she will never be able to satisfy the demands of his discriminating, if voracious, sensuality. At the end of the dialogue which is directed by Cressida toward the flaming zenith of Troilus' passion, Pandarus all but puts the couple to bed on the stage.

In this scene Shakespeare has portrayed with a realism seldom equaled in all literature the amorous preliminaries of an assignation of two adepts in the arts of preparatory love-play. He has composed a chapter in a new *Ars Amatoria*. More important for the structure of his drama, he has very effectively passed the first stage in the satirist's program of exhibition, exposure, and correction. He has presented the initial phase of the progress of a vice rampant in the *fin de siècle* society of the last years of Queen Elizabeth's reign—licentiousness. And he has practiced his art so skilfully as to awaken both derision of the sin and aversion to it. No one familiar with the methods and spirit of contemporary satire would expect happy results, to either lover, from this sensual encounter.

We next see the pair the following morning. Like Romeo and Juliet, they sing an *aubade*. But their matutinal exchange is accompanied, not by the sweet notes of the lark, but by the cawing of ribald crows. Cressida is petulant. She accuses Troilus of being tired of her. Men never stay long enough. Troilus, now released from the enchantment of his Circe, replies realistically that she had better be prudent—put on more clothes, one infers—or she will take cold and curse him for it. This is not the morning after an experience of love's "thrice repured" rapture. It is the fretful dialogue of two sated sensualists. The scene must have aroused derisive laughter among the worldly-wise young barristers who witnessed it. To point and prolong their enjoyment, Pandarus bustles in with a mouthful of suggestive comments.

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 165-67.

The infidelity of a highborn harlot like Cressida would be confidently expected. Shakespeare artfully prepares the audience for the awaited act of perfidy. She is made to answer with another shrill vow of eternal faithfulness the first summons to return to her father and the Greeks. To an audience realizing her frailty, her protestations produce effective dramatic irony. Almost immediately she loses even the shallow dignity that the utterance of the oath gives her for an instant. She promises that, at the coming moment of parting from her lover, her grief shall be exhibited in a manner which she believes is prescribed for a romantic lady in distress. She cries:

. . . . . I'll go in and weep.  
 . . . . .  
 Tear my bright hair and scratch my praised cheeks,  
 Crack my clear voice with sobs and break my heart  
 With sounding Troilus. I will not go from Troy."<sup>a</sup>

This violence would seem to her hearers the hypocritical posturing of a wanton putting on an ill-conceived display of feeling. They would murmur, "Methinks the lady doth protest too much."

The actual scene of farewell is not marred by any sobbing and scratching. Troilus shows the agony which he obviously feels. His emotions have an unworthy object and occasionally they border on hysteria, but they are never insincere. His first expressions are overwrought and, to an audience in whose minds all the circumstances of the recent brothel scene remained fresh, would have seemed inappropriately aroused. Talk of purity so "strain'd" (or, as the folios have it, so "strange") that the gods are jealous of its bright zeal, was ridiculous. Hence the benchers surely laughed at words like these:

Cressid, I love thee in so strain'd a purity  
 That the bless'd gods, as angry with my fancy,  
 More bright in zeal than the devotion which  
 Cold lips blow to their deities, take thee from me."<sup>a</sup>

But one must admit that Troilus, in the ensuing long speech, closes with so high and level a flight of the imagination that the genuineness of his grief, for a moment at least, makes us oblivious of its unworthy cause. Hence it seems an admirable expression of the sadness that all sudden partings of loved ones awaken:

<sup>a</sup>IV, ii, 111, 113-15.

<sup>a</sup>IV, iv, 26-29.

Injurious time now with a robber's haste  
 Crams his rich thievery up, he knows not how.  
 As many farewells as be stars in heaven,  
 With distinct breath and consign'd kisses to them,  
 He fumbles up into a loose adieu,  
 And scants us with a single famish'd kiss,  
 Distasted with the salt of broken tears.<sup>83</sup>

Such eloquence, we have seen, pervades the drama and lends an adventitious air of nobility to opinions and points of view for which Shakespeare manifestly did not wish to win sympathy. The reader should not be seduced into thinking that the passage is meant to be an expression of an utterly noble, unselfish love. Nevertheless, it is a moving display, however unjustified, of the powerful emotion that a young man like Troilus would certainly feel at a moment like this.

But Shakespeare is careful, even here, to preserve the kind of attitude, on the part of the spectators, that is demanded by his satiric treatment of Troilus as well as of Cressida. Accordingly, he does not allow them to leave the stage with an exalted strain of poetry ringing in our ears. He puts into Troilus' mouth absurdly reiterated demands for Cressida's fidelity—demands which everyone familiar with the tale knows that she cannot and will not observe. Hence the repeated "be true" becomes an ironic leitmotiv of the extended dialogue.

From this strained antiphonal, Cressida goes directly to the Greek camp, and kisses all the men, with an abandon much greater than the liberal customs of Elizabethan salutation prescribed. Ulysses, one of the commentators, is conveniently at hand to keep the audience clear on that point:

Fie, fie upon her!  
 There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,  
 Nay, her foot speaks; her wanton spirits look out  
 At every joint and motive of her body.<sup>84</sup>

So incorrigible a coquette and wanton clearly disappoints no dramatic expectation when she takes Diomed for her lover. He is a much more suitable mate for her than Troilus was, for he is a cynical realist, without romantic ideals which she must try to actualize. He

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, ll. 44-50.

<sup>84</sup>IV, v, 54-57.



does not put either her feelings or her vocabulary under any undue tension. In a pair of simple, flippant couplets she explains her transfer to his bed and board:

Ah, poor our sex! this fault in us I find,  
The error of our eye directs our mind.  
What error leads must err; O, then conclude  
Minds sway'd by eyes are full of turpitude.<sup>85</sup>

Some critics argue that Troilus' actual observation of Cressida's infidelity has been presented as a deeply "tragic situation"—"one of the most poignant scenes of eavesdropping in all Shakespeare."<sup>86</sup> But Troilus' discovery of her faithlessness inspires him to no nobility of thought or action. It merely stimulates him to indulge in what he himself calls "madness of discourse":

This she? no, this is Diomed's Cressida.  
If beauty have a soul, this is not she.  
If souls guide vows, if vows are sanctimony,  
If sanctimony be the gods' delight,  
If there be rule in unity itself,  
This is not she. O madness of discourse,  
That cause sets up, with and against thyself,  
Bi-fold authority, where reason can revolt  
Without perdition, and loss assume all reason  
Without revolt: this is, and is not, Cressid.<sup>87</sup>

But emotions endowed with tragic potentiality do not employ language so grotesquely tortured. Shakespeare's tragic heroes in great crises never confuse their passionate and imaginative utterance with such dialectical exercise. Troilus, in attempting to preserve his characteristic self-deceit in the face of contradictory objective fact, forces his logical machine to perform feats of prestidigitation that make it creak ridiculously. Yet its work enables him to persist in his substitution of a passion-spun distortion of fact for actuality. Thus he loses, for good and all, his hold on reality. Henceforward he acts like one distracted. The disordered lover all too easily becomes the disordered warrior. Crazy with disappointed passion, he futilely pursues his rival, Diomed, with shrill threats of "venom'd vengeance." And Hector's death only leads him to shake his fist more wildly in the direction of the "vile abominable tents" where tomorrow he will

<sup>85</sup>V, ii, 109-12.

<sup>86</sup>Olwen W. Campbell, in *London Mercury*, IV, 55.

<sup>87</sup>V, ii, 137-46.

frantically rush upon the "great-siz'd coward" and wreak revenge. His nature is always in the same state of emotional tumult. A chaotic personality of that sort espouses folly as easily when in love as when in war. Thersites points out the connection between the two fields of Troilus' conduct, by commenting on the "young Trojan ass, that loves the whore" and on his violent "clapper-clawing" of Diomed. He thereby prevents attribution of any nobility to their private squabble over a "dissembling luxurious drab." Like all buffoons, Thersites calls right things by wrong names. He tells the truth, however awry the form and spirit of his expression.

The ending of *Troilus and Cressida* is congenial to the purposes and methods of satire. Troilus' infatuation is presented in a way to provoke mingled feelings of revulsion and derision. This complicated emotion Shakespeare maintained and accentuated in his finale. Two kinds of denouement had become conventional to satire. The characters derided might undergo purgation and reform, as do most of those in Ben Jonson's comical satires, or they might be scornfully ejected. The latter method was, as we have seen, that of formal satire and was applied by Jonson to vicious characters like Sordido, for example. Social affectation might be appropriately purged by exposure that induced promises of amendment. But moral delinquency was too fundamental to the nature of the culprit to be thus easily corrected. It deserved to be pursued to the last by the scornful laughter of both author and audience. Hence the unusual close of the action should not be taken for proof that Shakespeare, when he conceived it, was bitter and disillusioned. Nor should critics be greatly troubled because Cressida is not punished and Troilus is not slain by Achilles on the stage. If we insist in following him beyond the limits of the play, after hearing his hysterical threat to haunt Achilles "like a wicked conscience still," we may surmise his fate. But, as a victim of uncontrolled passion for a wanton, he did not deserve the dignity of a death before the eyes of the spectators. And any similar moment of nobility Cressida deserved still less. Futility, Shakespeare clearly believed, was the proper end of characters presented in harmony with the intellectual and structural conventions of dramatic satire.

Pandarus functions as commentator for the love story, just as does Thersites for the events of the war. Though not exactly a

buffoon and a railer, Pandarus maintains as successfully as his fellow a derisive attitude on the part of his audience. No one who attends his speeches is in danger of mistaking for noble emotions the calculating passion of Cressida or the refined sensuality of Troilus. Pandarus' every utterance is designed to keep the hostile laughter awake. Even his tears at the imminent parting of the lovers would seem to be either crocodile drops or tokens of the disappointment of a pander at the loss of the office that gave his senile licentiousness vicarious satisfaction. The last lines of the play are devoted to his mock lament over the wretched rewards of a bawd. They show conclusively that it was his spirit that brooded over the chaos of the love story. ✓

#### IV. Allusions to Contemporary Conditions

Two further questions remain to be answered. The first is whether *Troilus and Cressida* is in any sense a document in the so-called war of the theatres, in which Jonson, Marston, and Dekker were involved. The only reason for such an assumption is the well-known speech of Kempe, in the second part of *The Return from Parnassus*, written about 1601-2: "O that *Ben Jonson* is a pestilent fellow, he brought up *Horace* giving the Poets a pill [i.e., in *Poetaster*], but our fellow *Shakespeare* hath given him a purge that made him beray his credit."<sup>10</sup> Almost all critics agree that, if a purge of that sort exists in any of Shakespeare's work, it is embodied in the character of Ajax. Personal satire, as we have seen, often intruded into comical satires, even when the principal attack was leveled against general social and ethical absurdities. Furthermore, a special audience, like the one for whom this play was composed, would not miss even subtle and delicate references to individuals. Indeed, such a group would probably have been disappointed if a drama written for them had not contained personal and political allusions which challenged their ingenuity. The barristers formed as homogeneous a crowd as an audience for a university play and could as easily have been made responsive to lampoons of persons and to ridicule of situations of which they would have had common knowledge.

In spite of these facts, the view ably maintained by Tatlock,<sup>11</sup> that

<sup>10</sup>IV, iii. (*The Pilgrimage to Parnassus, with the Two Parts of The Return from Parnassus*, ed. W. D. Macray [Oxford, 1886], p. 138, ll. 1810-13.)

<sup>11</sup>PMLA, XXX, 727-34.

it is practically impossible to recognize Ajax as a lampoon of Jonson, seems a sound one. Ajax is comic by virtue of the conduct which everyone in Shakespeare's day had come to expect of him. Hence neither his actions nor his speech would stimulate a curious audience to search for topical allusions. To be sure, certain traits—for example, pride, arrogance, railing, and "humorous" variability—which are attributed to him by other characters in the play, were ascribed to Jonson by his enemies. But Ajax' dominant characteristic was heavy stupidity, and no one would accuse the shrewd-tempered, shrewder-tongued dramatist of that vice. Besides, Ajax evidently appeared on the stage as a heavy, corpulent, "gorbellied" knave. He is called "the elephant Ajax," a man of "spacious and dilated" parts. But Jonson, less than thirty years old in 1602, was not the ponderous person he later became. Other contemporary references, like that describing him as a "lean hollow-cheeked scrag," show that he was then a thin man—one whom the fat actor who impersonated Ajax could in no way imitate by his make-up. For all these reasons it is extremely doubtful that any audience of the time could recognize Ajax as Jonson, or so much as think of the poet while Ajax was on the stage.

The second question is whether, as some recent critics have argued, Achilles is intended to be a lampoon of Essex. G. B. Harrison was the first to propose the theory that Shakespeare, in reading the seven books of Chapman's translation of Homer, published in 1598, noted the dedication "To the most honoured now living instance of the Achillean virtues eternized by divine Homer, the Earl of Essex, Earl Marshal, etc." This identification of the two, it is contended, gave the dramatist an idea, which Dr. Harrison in his last treatment of the question describes in the following cautious words: "So Chapman identified Achilles with my Lord Essex, and Shakespeare, whatever he might have intended, found the present significances of the story of Achilles thrust under his eyes. . . . Shakespeare was thus forced to see the old stories as reflections of his own time."<sup>90</sup> Harrison's latest opinion, then, seems to be that Shakespeare, when writing *Troilus and Cressida*, could not have dissociated Achilles from Essex, nor could his audience have done so.

Dover Wilson, in his charming piece of historical fiction, *The Essential Shakespeare*, is characteristically much less cautious:

<sup>90</sup>*Shakespeare at Work*, p. 220.

Written, I think, in those last bitter months of 1600 when Essex moped and sulked, and would or could do nothing, *Troilus and Cressida* was Shakespeare's courageous, almost savage, attempt to goad the earl into action. "This fellow Chapman likens your lordship to Achilles", he said in effect; "let me show you Achilles in the dramatic mirror; does the comparison flatter you?" It was bitter medicine, but

diseases desperate grown  
By desperate appliance are relieved,  
Or not at all,

and by the latter part of 1600 the friends of Essex were at their wits' end. . . . Surely the moral was plain: give up sulking, make terms with your Prince, think of England first.<sup>61</sup>

This theory is provocative enough to deserve careful examination. It depends entirely upon the pure assumption that *Troilus and Cressida* was written between August 27, 1600, when Essex was given his freedom from his two keepers, Sir Drue Drury and Sir Richard Barkely (and "only *his repaire to the Court forbidden*"),<sup>62</sup> and the Earl's mad attempt, on February 8, 1601, to arouse the citizens of London to take up arms for him.

What, precisely, was the situation, in Essex' career, that the conduct of Achilles is supposed to reflect? After the Earl had obtained his freedom from constant surveillance, he hoped for restoration to the Queen's favor. On November 17, 1600, the anniversary of her coronation, he wrote a last appealing letter to her, in which he said: "Only miserable Essex, full of pain, full of sickness, full of sorrow, languishing in repentance for his offences past, . . . joys only for your majesty's great happiness and happy greatness."<sup>63</sup> When Elizabeth completely ignored this humble letter, Essex became almost literally insane with resentment. He began to make Essex House a rendezvous for the politically disaffected of all sorts. One of the most vocal of the crowd was Henry Cuffe, formerly a professor of Greek, who had been Essex' secretary, off and on, since April, 1594.

<sup>61</sup>J. Dover Wilson, *The Essential Shakespeare* (Cambridge, 1932), pp. 101-2.

<sup>62</sup>Sir Henry Neville to Mr. Winwood, Aug. 28, 1600, in [Sir Ralph Winwood's] *Memorials of Affairs of State in the Reigns of Q. Elizabeth and K. James I*, ed. Edmund Sawyer (London, 1725), I, 250 (quoted Laura Hanes Cadwallader, *The Career of the Earl of Essex from the Islands Voyage in 1597 to His Execution in 1601* [Philadelphia, 1923], p. 71).

<sup>63</sup>Thomas Birch, *Memoirs Of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* (London, 1754), II, 462 (quoted Cadwallader, *op. cit.*, p. 72).

Cuffe had accompanied the Earl on his Irish campaign and had carried letters between him and Elizabeth. During Essex' imprisonment, Cuffe had remained in constant communication with him and on August 26, 1600, had re-entered his service and remained to the end deeply in his confidence. He urged his patron to resort to open rebellion and clearly was scornful of all his superiors. Bacon, in his official *Declaration of . . . Treasons*, described Cuffe as "a notable Traytor by the booke, being otherwise of a turbulent and mutinous spirit against all superiours."<sup>94</sup> And Essex himself, when confronted with Cuffe in the Tower just before his execution, said, "You have bene one of the chieftest instigators of me, to all these my disloyall courses, into which I have fallen."<sup>95</sup> Sir Sidney Lee, in his life of Cuffe in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, characterized him as follows: "He deprecated all compromise with those he regarded as the earl's enemies; taunted Essex with having already submitted voluntarily to many degradations; advised Essex's friends to form an alliance with all political malcontents in order to make themselves a party to be feared." Such a malicious detractor and inciter to open practices against the government of the Queen might seem to a classically trained Elizabethan gentleman to be a reincarnation of the spirit of Thersites.

With the help of Cuffe, the Earl began to make Essex House a rendezvous for "such as were discontented or turbulent, and such as were weake of judgement, and easie to be abused, or such as were wholly dependants and followers (for meanes or countenance) of himselfe, *Southampton* or some other of his greatest associates."<sup>96</sup> According to this statement Southampton's place in the conspiracy almost equaled in importance that of Essex. Southampton was his friend's representative at the conferences held, to escape notice, in the house of Sir Charles Danvers in London, where the details of the plot were settled. As Bacon reported, "after, *Southampton* having married his kinswoman, and plunged himselfe wholly into his fortune, and being his continuall Associat in *Ireland*, hee accounted of him as most assured unto him."<sup>97</sup> That was the popular opinion.

<sup>94</sup>Francis Bacon, *A Declaration of the Practices & Treasons attempted and committed by Robert late Earle of Essex . . . Together with the very Confessions* (London, 1601), sig. D2<sup>v</sup>. <sup>95</sup>*Ibid.*, sig. Q3<sup>v</sup>. <sup>96</sup>*Ibid.*, sig. D3.

<sup>97</sup>*Ibid.*, sig. D4<sup>r</sup>&<sup>v</sup>. Cf. also: "He had other persons, (which were *Cuffe* and *Blunt*) of more inwardnesse and confidence with him then these, (*Southampton* only excepted)." (*Ibid.*, sig. E<sup>v</sup>.)

Southampton and Essex were sworn brothers in fortune and conspiracy—as much hand in glove as Achilles and Patroclus.\* Not until Southampton had been murderously attacked in the streets of London by Lord Grey of Wilton did Essex definitely decide that, in order to establish his ascendancy over the Queen, he must adopt the violent course of taking possession of the court. Like Achilles, he was aroused to characteristic deeds only by a disaster to his bosom friend.

No one can deny that there are resemblances between the situation which Essex, Southampton, and Henry Cuffe occupied in late 1600 and early 1601 and that of Achilles, Patroclus, and Thersites in *Troilus and Cressida*. Indeed, they are so close that, had the play been presented at the time or shortly afterward, part of a selected audience would have been practically sure to catch them. But, if they were intended, they are almost certainly incidental, forming a kind of adventitious intellectual decoration. During the months immediately preceding his arrest, Essex and his associates were engaged in well-nigh feverish plotting. They were constantly conferring, rushing here and there to set the elaborate trap that was to be sprung later. Achilles and Patroclus were sunk in indolence and indulgence. Such a dramatic situation is ineptly designed if meant to serve as a picture of the intrigues in process of formation at Essex House.

Besides, had the identification been part of Shakespeare's original intention, his exact purpose would be nearly impossible to divine. Only a short time before, in *Henry V*, he had made a flattering reference to Essex' popularity while he was fighting for Queen and country in Ireland. Shakespeare's personal and political sympathies, throughout his career, seem definitely to have been on the side of Essex and Southampton. A dramatist with such prepossessions can

\*Shakespeare's version of the friendship is the only one that suggests a homosexual relationship between the two Greeks. And then it is only Thersites, the detractor, who calls Patroclus Achilles' "brach" (bitch) and "his masculine whore." One need not believe that any such relationship actually existed between Essex and Southampton, to realize that insinuations of this scandal may well have been current at the time. Southampton's effeminate appearance would be enough to start such tales in an age when the subject was not taboo. Perhaps Shakespeare, in his twentieth sonnet, gives us the most sympathetic view of Southampton's ladylike appearance:

"A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted  
Hast thou, the master mistress of my passion;  
A man . . . . .  
Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth,  
And for a woman wert thou first created."

hardly be imagined writing a lampoon of Essex that would have filled his enemies with delight.

A critic who tries to construe Shakespeare's treatment of Achilles as a veiled appeal or warning to Essex, finds himself in a maze of similar improbabilities. Dover Wilson<sup>7</sup> believes that the dramatist was trying to dissuade the Earl from rebellion by assuring him that if he waited and "wisely became friends with the old Queen, the crown would fall into his lap." Here again the symbolism does not fit the interpretation. To exhibit the efforts of the Greek chieftains to make Achilles join battle is certainly a curious way in which to tell Essex to do nothing—to bide his time until he can regain the favor of the Queen. These considerations are evidence that, if political and personal allusions are to be found in this play, they must be regarded as merely a form of imaginative connotation. They do not lie on the highway of the author's satiric intention.

#### V. Conclusion

The foregoing analysis of *Troilus and Cressida* has attempted to show how much of the drama expresses familiar attitudes of Shakespeare and how much has been determined by the conventions of the satiric movement of which he consciously made it a part. The play is not his first picture of a social organization reduced to chaos by weakness in the leader and the consequent disruption of an intricate system of allegiances and obediences. Nor are the ethical ideas upon which the corrective satire depends unfamiliar. The principal characters have allowed their passions to triumph over their reason and in consequence are inevitably driven to unhappy ends. In Shakespeare's tragedies the subversive passions are so powerful that they bring to their victims disaster and death. In *Troilus and Cressida*, they impose ridiculous servitude, which appropriately leads to folly and futility. Frustration was seldom depicted by Shakespeare, but the satirists frequently presented it as the result of the follies they exposed; and the myriad-minded dramatist took this one occasion to experiment with its portrayal. The fact that only in *Troilus and Cressida* did he contrive this kind of play gives the critics some warrant for calling it the most un-Shakespearean of his works.

But these hostile critics mean more than that by their phrase.

<sup>7</sup>*Op. cit.*, p. 102.



In it they express complete aversion to the attitude which they believe Shakespeare assumed toward the material from which he fashioned *Troilus and Cressida*. One school of opinion conceives that attitude to be the result of purely personal and subjective feeling. Shakespeare, they contend, was disillusioned with life and a prey to bitter misanthropy. The most recent exponents of this idea do not advance the naïve view that Shakespeare—in depicting Cressida, for example—was taking revenge on women for the inconstancy of a mistress. Nor do they assume that a seizure of nervous exhaustion or perhaps even a serious illness had given him a morbid outlook upon life. At least they try to translate their concept into terms of artistic creation, as Dr. Harrison does in the following passage: "Shakespeare went further in this purgation of his pent-up emotions, and in the Cressida story he erupted those disgusts at bodily love, and lust, and faithlessness which from time to time would come over him with an overpowering sense of physical nausea."<sup>100</sup> Every sort of literary expression must of course bear some relation to the personal experience of its author. Yet that relationship is so complicated that any attempt to deduce from a work of art the author's state of mind at the moment of its creation, is sure to be ill-starred. The results can have no sound basis in fact.

At the opposite pole from these biographical critics are those who believe that no personal attitude of Shakespeare toward any subject can be discovered in the play. They feel that his acceptance of tradition explains everything. His treatment of his characters was, in their opinion, invariably that which had become conventional by 1600; so he merely admitted into *Troilus and Cressida* creatures whose lineaments had been fashioned by other hands than his. At most, they insist, he exaggerated some traits or deliberately distorted others and, as usual, endowed all of the figures in his dramas with a vitality and a power of intense poetical expression that give one an impression of complete artistic sincerity. But that sort of aesthetic superiority is in no sense dependent upon intense personal conviction.

Yet it is unintelligent to assume that Shakespeare expresses no ideas of his own in *Troilus and Cressida*. Satire is one of the least objective of all forms of literature, and this satiric drama is no exception to the rule. But in order to discover what personal points of

<sup>100</sup>G. B. Harrison, *op. cit.*, p. 227.

view Shakespeare presents in the play, we must first identify those characteristics inherent in the new type of comedy he was seeking to compose, and subtract them from any confession of faith we attribute to him. For example, the vicious bitterness of Thersites and the leering suggestiveness of Pandarus are variations of the typical attitude of the traditional buffoon, who functioned as a commentator in many of the comical satires. Thersites adds to the buffoon's extravagance some of the probing malevolence of Macilente, and like him is a slave of envy. Hence the utterances of Thersites and Pandarus should not be regarded as reflections of Shakespeare's ideas—still less of his spirit.

Similarly, the unusual ending of *Troilus and Cressida* serves to dismiss the derided characters in a way that was conventional to satire and leaves the audience in the mocking attitude toward them that is demanded by the type. Shakespeare's successful adaptation of his denouement to the essential spirit of satire should clearly not be mistaken for surrender to despair and black pessimism.

Nevertheless, among the distinguishing characteristics of the literary type is the tendency to reflect, albeit in exaggerated and distorted form, the world in which the author lives. Hence George Brandes<sup>101</sup> is right in asserting, "It is precisely his [Shakespeare's] own times, and no other, that were in his mind when he wrote this play." We should, therefore, search there for the dramatist's social comment rather than for his metaphysical affirmations or his discovery of the ultimate human values. If such be the correct critical point of view, we must regard with skepticism Brandes' further announcement that, when composing *Troilus and Cressida*, Shakespeare "felt hero-worship, like love, to be an illusion of the senses." For the same reason we must distrust H. B. Charlton's interesting comment: "*Troilus and Cressida* seethes with questionings of life's value. . . . Living is a series of frustrations— . . . Thrown on his own resources and his own pragmatic systems . . . man finds himself with nothing of greater sanction than mere opinion. . . . The touch of nature which makes the whole world kin is a delusive avidity for what is novel and an indifference to what even on its own standards has been proved to be good."<sup>102</sup> Professor Charlton, in arriving at

<sup>101</sup> *Shakespeare*, II, 214.

<sup>102</sup> "The Dark Comedies," *Bulletin of The John Rylands Library, Manchester*, XXI, 101.

these conclusions, has either mistaken the artfully maintained satiric mood of the drama for a revelation of the author's defeated spirit, or illogically taken the opinions of any character in the work, if eloquently expressed, to be Shakespeare's own dearest convictions. It is a tribute to the playwright's creative energy that he has succeeded in endowing literary conventions with so much vigor that an acute critic like Professor Charlton has been misled into confusing artistic vitality with personal passion.

It is a hopeless quest, then, to search in this satiric comedy for utterances of universal truth or for revelations of Shakespeare's inmost soul; yet the speeches of the characters, and the plot itself, may disclose some of the author's definite social and ethical attitudes. For example, we have been able to recognize the action as an illustration of one of his most consistently held political opinions. He presents anew the philosophy that animates many of the chronicle history plays—namely, that when a prince ceases to command the customary allegiance of his subjects, each as required by his degree, the authority of all other social duties is destroyed at its source. The inevitable result is confusion, in which every sort of co-operative effort is rendered futile and abortive.

Such a state of political anarchy, so the drama informs us, produces a corresponding chaos in the moral world, affecting all the individuals living in a society thus disordered. When Reason, the legitimate Prince of the microcosm, abdicates, men follow the usurping Passions, who divide and dissipate his authority. They transfer their allegiance, even though they realize that in so doing they are flouting the lessons of experience and closing their ears to the warning of logical imperatives. This philosophy is an amalgam of the official Tudor political theory and the most popular Renaissance version of Aristotelian ethics.

Whatever the form in which Shakespeare chose to dramatize the concept, the political and ethical philosophy of his day was not the product of mere book learning, but was partly determined by certain nearly contemporary events. Before we glance at them, however, we must satisfy ourselves that Shakespeare's object was not to denounce and ridicule war as an institution. The authors of the late medieval English versions of the Troy story did attack war as the Homeric heroes waged it. These Olympian schoolboys did not govern their

actions by those principles of chivalry that, even in the sixteenth century, constituted the rules of civilized warfare. Lydgate in his *Troy Book* shows, again and again, how such ideals fail to restrain Mars, the "first mever of anger and of hate," when he is on a rampage—for the god is

Compassynge and suspicious,  
Trist and soleyne, & ful of hevines,  
And assentyng to al cursidnes.<sup>108</sup>

Moreover, both Lydgate, and Caxton in his *Recuyell*, severely disapprove of wars undertaken for trivial or unworthy reasons. Contests so motivated unloose the anarchical passions of pride, envy, and hatred, which shake degree and tend to disrupt any social organization. Caxton, in particular, constantly pauses, in his narrative, to assail manifestations of military savagery, such as Achilles' shameful treatment of Hector's dead body. And he makes the conduct of the Trojan war serve to show how "jeopardous" it is to begin an armed conflict and what "harmes, losses and deth foloweth." It is not certain that Shakespeare had ever read Lydgate's poem, but he surely knew Caxton's *Recuyell* thoroughly. Familiarity with merely this one English version of the Troy story would have made him realize that the tale had traditionally been regarded as a suitable vehicle for the execration and derision of war. And certain recent critics have believed that Shakespeare did employ the traditional story for just that purpose. Mrs. Olwen Campbell asserts that in *Troilus and Cressida* he is looking "into the very darkest abyss of war: an abyss so seemingly infinite that each division of its blackness is in turn infinite."<sup>104</sup>

But a close scrutiny of the action fails to reveal advanced humanitarian views. Even if Shakespeare had succeeded in expressing them, they would have been incomprehensible to the audiences of his day. *Troilus and Cressida*, when approached without anachronistic predispositions, shows unmistakably that its author is presenting a striking example of an irrationally continued and stupidly managed conflict. It is conducted in a way that contravenes the first principles of all effective political organization. Neither army is subject to the control of a leader. The actions of the warriors in both hosts thus

<sup>108</sup>*Troy Book*, IV, ll. 4468-70 (quoted Henderson, "Shakespeare's *Troilus and Cressida*," *op. cit.*, p. 151).

<sup>104</sup>*London Mercury*, IV, 59.

serve as an *exemplum horrendum* of the dire results which follow neglect of a fundamental principle of Elizabethan political theory. Ulysses clearly announces the thesis of the play in his famous speech on degree, already quoted. Only because this war is waged anarchistically, does the author paint it as a black picture of human effort. The battles are not instruments of any reasonable policy, but futile strife expressing the selfish passions of a mob of uncontrolled individuals. Hence the conflict degenerates into a series of private quarrels—sheer aimless cruelty. And a war which serves only to liberate destructive personal passions inevitably becomes a chaos of meaningless slaughter and brutality.

The picture which Shakespeare presents was not entirely a product of his imaginative revivification of famous battles of antiquity, guided by conventions which earlier English narrators of the tale of Troy had established. Nor was it merely a fortunate dramatization of convictions, widely prevalent at the time, which Shakespeare himself held. Nearly contemporary events seem to have suggested some of the distinctive details of the picture. Situations very similar to those existing in the camps of both the Trojans and the Greeks formed part of the personal experience of many an Elizabethan gentleman. More than one martial undertaking on which they had embarked was disrupted by contentions, jealousies, and disloyalties like those displayed by the warriors in *Troilus and Cressida*. For example, the expedition that had sailed for the Peninsula in the summer of 1596 began with backbiting and strife between the followers of Essex and Raleigh. Although successful in capturing Cadiz, it almost met disaster through quarrels between the commanders. On the Islands Voyage of the following year the dissension among the followers of these two rivals was still more serious. Raleigh's capture of Fayal, before the arrival of Essex, was so much resented by members of the latter's sycophantic entourage that certain of them, notably Sir Gelly Merrick and Sir Christopher Blount, urged their chief to behead Raleigh. Though he refused to do so, he obviously felt intense anger over Raleigh's independence of his authority, and thus betrayed his belief that the protection of his honor ought to take precedence over military necessity. Conduct of that sort indicates, as plainly as the action of some of the warriors in *Troilus and Cressida*, "the quixotic sacrifice of national interest to a fantastic

code of chivalry." Because of the continued subjection of national military action to the conventions of an outmoded system of gentlemanly behavior, the Islands Voyage resulted in a futile waste of money and of human life. Even after the men had returned to England, rancor between Essex and Raleigh was kept alive by the buzzing of their partisans. Such was the result of war carried on in order to win glory for individuals rather than to attain national political objectives—whether it was waged by Greeks and Trojans centuries before Shakespeare's time or by his own contemporaries.

The state of anarchy which disrupts the rival hosts causes a corresponding ethical dislocation in the lives of the individual warriors. Men who deliberately refuse to be governed by experience and reason in their social enterprises, Shakespeare says, similarly reject the rule of reason in their world of personal ethics. Hence unrestrained passions rage there. Pride, envy, hatred, and lust become guides to action. In choosing to display these as the most destructive of the deadly sins, Shakespeare was following the lead both of the dehorters from vice and of the formal satirists of the late sixteenth century. In attributing to political disorganization the complete emancipation of subversive passions, he was reiterating what seems to have been a firmly held personal conviction.

Furthermore, it is probable that the particular form in which Shakespeare chose to dramatize and reprehend personal passions was also partly determined by current manifestations of their danger. Individual pride, disguised as a noble covetousness of knightly honor, almost wrecked the Elizabethan military expeditions to which we have referred. Joined to this haughty spirit was another decadent survival of the institution of chivalry—medieval *fine amor*, or romantic devotion to a lady. Professor W. W. Lawrence, among others, has reminded us that there was much "fantastic exaggeration of mediaeval *fine amor* in the manners of Elizabeth and her court."<sup>108</sup> Attempts of the socially inexperienced to assume forms of behavior that were *de rigueur* in courts of love resulted in a great deal of absurdity. To such inept imitation of manners once considered gracious and exquisite, Ben Jonson devotes, as we have seen, not a little of the ridicule in his comical satires and makes it the sole concern of *Cynthias Revels*.

<sup>108</sup>Shakespeare's Problem Comedies, p. 143.

Shakespeare, in *Troilus and Cressida*, derides the persistence of the conventions of this *fine amor* in social classes higher than those which the arrant pretenders formed. He turns his attention to such exhibitions of the cult as appeared in the adventurers and military leaders among the nobility and lesser gentry. He exhibits several of the finest warriors as frequently losing opportunities for effective action because they feel an imperious obligation to serve their ladies in the fantastic ways prescribed by the ceremonies and fictions of romantic love. F. S. Boas has called attention to the fact. Shakespeare, he writes, manipulates his traditional materials until they become "a merciless satire of the high-flown ideal of love, fostered by the mediaeval cycle of romance."<sup>106</sup> More specifically, one might say that Shakespeare makes the actions of the warriors in their struggle on the plains of Troy deride inane survivals, in many Elizabethan gentlemen, of the moribund cult of chivalry.

Tucker Brooke takes approximately the same view when he says that Shakespeare is satirizing the "febrile Essex type of decadent chivalry."<sup>107</sup> It is true that the extravagant protestations of devotion made to their ladies by the lovers in medieval romance were repeated by many Elizabethan courtiers, of whom Essex was the bright particular star. Hamlet was travestyng them when at Ophelia's open grave he challenged Laertes to drink vinegar or eat a crocodile. Gentlemen of the court found this form of chivalric protestation beautifully adapted to the expression of their pretended love for the Queen. And Essex himself indubitably furnished some of the most ostentatious exhibitions of that sort of chivalric posturing. For example, it is reported that while he was campaigning in the Peninsula, he thrust his pike into one of the gates of Lisbon, "'demanding aloud if any Spaniard mewed therein durst adventure forth in favour of his mistress to break a lance.' There was no reply."<sup>108</sup> The irrational obligations to the service of love, which warriors in *Troilus and Cressida* continually recognize as inescapable, would suggest such behavior as that of Essex. The folly of the characters in the play and the absurdity of the actions of many Elizabethan gentlemen would thus enhance each other, in the minds of the spectators.

<sup>106</sup>*Shakspeare and His Predecessors*, p. 373.

<sup>107</sup>*Yale Review*, XVII, 576.

<sup>108</sup>Lytton Strachey, *Elizabeth and Essex* (London, 1930), p. 34 (quoted Lawrence, *op. cit.*, p. 144).

In his depiction of Ulysses and Diomed, Shakespeare, according to some critics, was deriding another sort of men who were assuming more and more prominence in his day. They were what Tucker Brooke calls "the strident go-getters of the newer dispensation"<sup>100</sup>—figures like Cecil, whom contemporary audiences might easily have thought portrayed by Ulysses, and like Raleigh, who might have been brought to mind by Diomed. But if our analysis of Ulysses is correct, he is the object of little derision. He is, usually, the authentic commentator—the mouthpiece of Shakespeare's opinions. As such he can hardly have been intended for a Machiavellian fox, who becomes a victim of his own oversubtlety. Not he, but every character who ignores his advice and rejects his ideas, becomes futile and the object of scornful laughter. Diomed is an unsympathetic character, but his rough-and-ready nature was determined partly by tradition and partly by Shakespeare's plan to have him serve as a sharp contrast to the impassioned Troilus. None of his actions makes it likely that the dramatist intended him to be even momentarily identified with Raleigh. Professor Brooke's theory is possibly a manifestation of a persistent critical belief that the Trojans in the play represent a fineness of feeling and nobility of endeavor which the churlish Greeks brutally destroy. But this discernment of a clear-cut moral difference between the men of the two armies is seemingly one of the misinterpretations incident to a wrong conception of the purpose of the work.

Shakespeare's satiric treatment of *fine amor*, with its irrational code of behavior, and his harsh derision of anarchistic conduct of war, united to form pointed criticism of contemporary phenomena. His twofold assault proves his cognizance of the sinister disruptive social forces abroad in England at the turn of the century. To this extent he was anatomizing the confusion rife in the days of the aging Elizabeth.

However, Shakespeare's animadversions, through *Troilus and Cressida*, upon distressing phases of the life of his day should not be mistaken for confessions of his own profound pessimism. The play belongs to a group of satirical dramas which, by 1601-2, had developed clearly defined methods. Like all satires, whatever their form, *Troilus and Cressida* inevitably suggests disillusionment and cynicism.

<sup>100</sup>*Loc. cit.*



Its tone is necessarily cheerless unless the spectator is able to derive a measure of mirth from critical and derisive laughter. The principal characters, for the same reason, are ridiculous, contemptible, and often detestable.

Other features of *Troilus and Cressida* which have frequently seemed to be revelations of Shakespeare's personal problems can now be shown to be his adaptations of methods standardized by Jonson and Marston in the comical satires they had already composed. Ulysses and Hector are commentators—representatives of the author. Like Macilente, Felice, and Quadratus, they are philosophers of a sort. The pair expound the political theories which their creator had illustrated in some of the chronicle histories, and the ethical system which he was to embody in many of his tragedies. Thersites and Pandarus are buffoons—original variations of the type which Carlo Buffone represented. They are just as contemptuous as the *raisonneurs* of the follies and sins which the play exposes, but are so abandoned in their methods of reprehension that they break all the rules of artistic decorum. However, they awaken the boisterous laughter which all Elizabethan audiences demanded from some part of every comic drama. They serve as equivalents of the louts and clowns of other kinds of comedy.

The abuses which the characters in *Troilus and Cressida* personify are not social absurdities such as Jonson derided in characters like Fastidious Brisk, Fungoso, Saviolina, or the eight pretenders in *Cynthias Revels*. The revival of the forms of chivalric ceremony which Jonson had presented merely as the personal peccadillos of Puntarvolo, is shown in *Troilus and Cressida* to be a dangerous foe to rational behavior, both private and social. Nor are the figures who are marked for ridicule, there, reflections of disordered economic conditions, as is Sordido. Shakespeare's satire in this play was predominantly ethical. He shows that the moral lapses of the warriors follow hard upon the weakening of their political and social obligations. It must be acknowledged that he fails to treat the licentiousness of the lovers as a symptom of decay in the social organizations to which they belong. Their story does not illustrate, as some recent critics would have us believe, the disastrous effects that war has upon sexual morality. Nevertheless, it cogently teaches the devastating consequences of unrestrained physical passion, and thus attaches itself

to the persistent and vicious attacks of the formal satirists upon that sin. As we have seen, Jonson, in his depiction of the careers of Ovid and Julia in *Poetaster*, had converted the relatively brutal luxuriousness reprehended by his poetic predecessors into a refined sensuality more like that of the vehement Troilus and the calculating Cressida.

The fate of the principal characters in Shakespeare's drama is harmonious with that prescribed by both the artistic ends and the moral purposes of all satire. Jonson and Marston, in their comical satires, led the dramatic action up to the exposure of the derided figures both to themselves and to the audience. The attainment of this desirable result was assigned to one of the official commentators, who spun for the purpose a plot of a typical wit-intriguer. The victims then usually admitted their faults, submitted to purgation, and announced their reform. Characters who had been addicted only to some kind of social affectation might persuade an audience to accept their promises as adequate proofs of their amendment. But the authors were not content to deal thus indulgently with downright moral delinquency. They thought best to pursue it, to the very end of the play, with scornful laughter, in which the audience was induced to join. The formal satirists had applied precisely that method. They had ejected their evil men and women from their poems, with exclamations of sharp disdain. Jonson, as we have seen, treated his vicious characters in the same manner. He used his whip of steel on Sordido, and drove Ovid out of *Poetaster* into the exile which the historical records conveniently prescribed. Shakespeare himself had banished Malvolio from the action of *Twelfth Night*, to the accompaniment of jibes and jeers from the enemies who had exposed him. The finale of *Troilus and Cressida* is a variation of such an approved catastrophe for the derided characters in a satire, and it must thus be regarded, not as the expression of personal disillusionment with love and its rituals, but as the intelligent use of an accepted artistic convention. Hence the critics who are troubled because Shakespeare does not punish Cressida, or put on the stage Troilus' death at the hands of Achilles, can be convicted of aesthetic confusion. They demand that the author attach to a comical satire an ending proper only to a tragedy. If they will but realize that the drama must close with the satiric spirit clearly dominant, they need not continue to be perplexed by its unusual denouement.

If this analysis of *Troilus and Cressida* be accepted, one may fairly ask why the play has continued so long to baffle scholars. The reason may be that, lacking a clue to the nature of the artistic form which Shakespeare was attempting to write, they had no objective explanation of the features of the piece which made it different from all the rest of his work. Consequently, they were forced to solve the puzzle by methods of biographical interpretation that have become pretty thoroughly discredited. Possibly Shakespeare's temperamental unfitness for the composition of an effective comical satire has prolonged the bewilderment. Critics who stigmatize *Troilus and Cressida* as un-Shakespearean may be right. The half-grim, half-derisive mood demanded of the author of satiric drama was, perhaps, not suited to his genius. His mind was unable to assume the required flippancy in the face of human aberrations capable of producing as serious results as those issuing from the abysmal follies of the Greeks and Trojans. The sustained intensity of his mind, joined to his tendency toward philosophical lyricism, lent the play a depth of tone which makes his satire ring with universal meanings.

This, perhaps, is why *Troilus and Cressida* seems little like the poems and plays in which Shakespeare's contemporaries had recently been attacking and deriding the very sins and follies here ridiculed. Partly because he made the play a vehicle for his political philosophy, it gives an impression of wide social and political disintegration. Though he may have intended only to anatomize the faults and foibles abroad in London during the last years of Queen Elizabeth's reign, he has appeared to many to be making a rendezvous with despair and doom. Such a conception palpably throws the work completely out of artistic focus and provokes unjustified inferences about the parlous state of Shakespeare's mind at the time of writing. The present study will have attained the limited end in view if it enables critics to place *Troilus and Cressida* in its proper historical dramatic environment. They can then pass judgment on the satiric play in accordance with the nature of Shakespeare's artistic purpose and with the nature of the effects he tried to produce.

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